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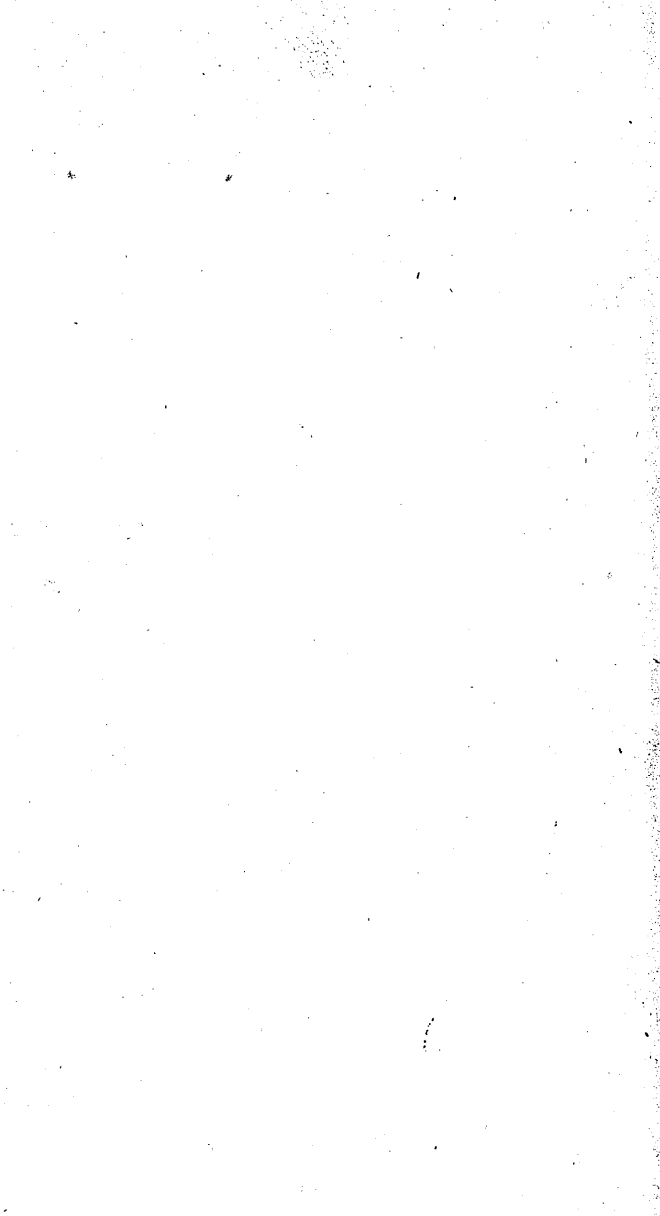
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EXTRACTS

FROM

T H E L E T T E R S

OF

JONATHAN HUTCHINSON,

WITH SOME

BRIEF NOTICES OF HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

L O N D O N :

HARVEY AND DARTON, GRACECHURCH-STREET.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IT seems due to the reader of this volume, and to the memory of JONATHAN HUTCHINSON, to prefix a little biographical information concerning him : this must necessarily be very brief, from the few incidents which his life presented. It is the less needful that much should be attempted as descriptive of character, because our beloved and honoured friend possessed in a remarkable manner the talent of conveying to his correspondents his mental feelings, his joys and conflicts. His letters are written in the confidence of friendship : but I believe that had he been consulted he would have freely left his friends at liberty to give a more extended circulation after his decease, to this disclosure of his opinions and his religious experience, if they thought that by so doing the Christian traveller would be warned, encouraged, or helped in his pilgrimage towards an eternal inheritance. In the hope that to more than a few they will prove in this way both acceptable and instructive, they are now offered to the candid perusal of the public.

THE following particulars of the early part of the life of JONATHAN HUTCHINSON are extracted from a short manuscript of his own writing, found after his decease.

“ I was born at Gedney, in the county of Lincoln, on the seventh of the second month, 1760; where, as I have been informed, my ancestors had resided for many generations, in the outward occupation of farmers, the only business that I ever followed. It also appears that a part of the family from which I was descended, joined the religious society of Friends soon after its rise.

“ But though thus inheriting the privileges of rural retirement, and the simplicity of pastoral life,—educated too in the principles of an excellent Christian profession, yet that interesting and dangerous portion of my life, between leaving school and manhood, was strongly characterized by the sins and follies to which youth and inexperience are so peculiarly liable;—whilst its succeeding stages, even the most happy and favoured of them, have, in my own view at least, been remarkable for their weakness, unworthiness, and vicissitude; so much so, that throughout the whole of my probationary course there have been certain critical and eventful periods, wherein my sufferings of body and mind have been such, as to leave me but just in possession of life and sense. Yet on this solemn retrospect, I find nothing to complain of but fallen self, acted upon by a delusive world, and an unwearied spiritual adversary.

“ I therefore would not ‘charge God foolishly,’ seeing that

in all, and through all, his kindness and forbearance towards me have been extended in a manner equally unmerited and incomprehensible to my own understanding; and, like many other parts of his government, both in nature and grace, they appear to admit of no other possible solution than is to be found in this scriptural declaration, 'The ways of the Lord are higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts.'

"I do not remember having been favoured in my early years with the tendering visitations of Divine love, either so often or so powerfully as we find recorded of divers religious persons; but I seem rather to have been left to explore in much solitude the depth and the misery of fallen nature in its greatest bitterness; so that before I had attained the twentieth year of my age, the enemy of all good possessed a fearful ascendancy over me. But whilst in many instances he led me captive at his will, yet as in the case of poor Job, his power was limited; and he was not permitted, as was evidently his design, to complete the destruction both of my body and soul, which by the interposing arm of Israel's God, were mercifully preserved, and marvellously delivered from the last effort of his cruel and malignant grasp.

"For after many sore and ineffectual conflicts, in which hope at length had taken its departure, I was favoured with so convincing an evidence that God desireth not the death of a sinner, as that my heart was strongly inclined towards a state of subjection and obedience to Him. But though thus made willing, the performances of my apprehended duty have ever been so poor and humiliating, as to give me occasion with deep feeling to respond to this lan-

guage of David: 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.' Amen and amen! saith a soul which thou hast indeed brought out of a horrible pit, and taught to sing thy praise.

"The first vocal prayer I remember having uttered, was extorted from me by distress, when, in a kneeling attitude, I was preparing to cut some hay for cattle. The purport of it may serve to show the darkness and doubt of the heart from which it burst, like water from the rock when smitten by the rod of Moses; it was brief, being comprehended in these few emphatic words, 'If there be a God in heaven, I pray Thee help me.'"

In a review of a remarkable visitation which he had experienced, he thus wrote some years after its occurrence:—"The visitation of Divine love and mercy, which thou wast favoured with in thy lonely journey, appears to have been a very precious one indeed, and has reminded me much of that which, as perhaps I have before told thee, about fourteen years ago, as I was riding alone on the highway, completed, as I am willing to hope, a conversion which had previously been most unstable and wavering; or rather shall I say which rescued me from the jaw of the lion and paw of the bear, and placed my poor soul in a capacity to endeavour to know and to do the will of God. Since that eventful crisis in my spiritual history, I think I have never absolutely turned my back on the way which appeared to be cast up for me, nor wilfully departed from my God; though I have had some conflicts, and have yet at times so feelingly to deplore the remaining weaknesses of my nature, that even this very morning I

could only find access to the footstool of mercy by loathing and abhorring all that could properly be called *myself*, as in dust and ashes. But what a favour it is when, even through the deepest humiliations, peace is restored to the sorrowful or wounded spirit !”

In the early period of his life, when our beloved friend had scarcely attained manhood, he underwent a very close trial in the death of an amiable young woman, whom he tenderly loved. This attachment was mutual ; they were on the point of marriage, but she became consumptive, and rapidly sunk away. She lived in a distant part of the country, and he scarcely reached her residence before her earthly race was run. Thus were his fond and early hopes blighted. This sorrow came upon him when, to use his own words, he was “as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke ;” but through the mercy of his heavenly Father, the dispensation was blessed. He saw the vanity of his past course, and was enabled to take a more correct estimate of the end of his being, its object, and its duties. We have scarcely any particulars of many of the succeeding years of his life : he settled down in his native village, and pursued his ordinary avocations in life as a grazier ; his attachment to the principles and practices of our religious Society increased, and he was respected and beloved by his friends ; but a full surrender of his heart to the government of the Holy Spirit had not been made, and hence he did not show forth that consistency of Christian character which was afterwards conspicuous in him.

About ten or twelve years after the event already referred to, he entered into married life with Rachel Procter of Selby. The enjoyment of this connexion was not of

very long duration. In 1808 he was deprived of his beloved companion, and left with a family of young children. They had been closely united; and she was taken from him after a very short and painful illness; this bereavement was acutely felt by his sensitive mind.

In the course of the following year, whilst attending upon that devoted servant of Christ, Deborah Darby, who was with her companion on a religious visit in his neighbourhood, he first spoke as a minister of the Gospel. His ministry "was not in many words, but under a feeling of Divine requiring, and it found great acceptance with his friends." To this short, but full testimony of the Friends of his Monthly Meeting, who knew him long and well, they further add, that he "was greatly beloved by them, and in a particular manner by those who knew the most of him; his humility and condescending kindness to his friends greatly endeared him to them. He was a truly valuable and most affectionate husband, a kind and watchful father, and to his neighbours generally, but particularly to the poor; his attention to their tried situations and relief of their wants, were very frequent and acceptable."

It may be further remarked, that his ministry was much valued by his friends generally. It was delivered in much simplicity and religious feeling, short, but comprehensive, and in that Gospel authority which rendered it both instructive and edifying to the assembly. His public petitions at the throne of grace were solemn and reverent, in few words; and being offered in the Spirit, often tended to spread a spirit of supplication over the meeting.

In private intercourse with his friends, his society was

much valued. His conversation was instructive; he was particularly careful not to reflect upon the failings of others; his own personal trials and constitution of mind gave a seriousness, but not a gloom to his general deportment; and his gentle, retiring manners, blended with Christian independence and politeness, endeared him to his friends, whilst it led them to treat him with respect and deference. He was peculiarly qualified to share with those in trouble, and ready to manifest his sympathy, whether these troubles arose from mental conflict or adverse circumstances.

A near relative, who from his early life was permitted to share his friendship, thus writes of his honoured uncle. "To the youth he loved to address himself; and to this important class, both on solemn religious occasions, and during the hours of social enjoyment, he rendered himself particularly attractive. His lively recollections of the feelings incident to their age; his charitable allowance for unintentional failings; his discriminating judgment and unceasing courtesy, while they commanded admiration, softened, enlarged, and edified the hearts of his juvenile friends. If they were of a literary turn, his knowledge of the best authors furnished him with subjects congenial to their taste. If conversation of a more general character prevailed, he enriched it with the observations of a Christian philosopher, and was admirably qualified to give an improving direction to what might otherwise have degenerated into trifles. If rural affairs were preferred, as a practical agriculturist he would often prove interesting, and seldom failed to secure their attention. If they en-

joyed the beauties of nature, he enjoyed them also, in no ordinary degree, and willingly imparted the fruits of his careful observation and pious reflection.

“ In these conversations, which I have often listened to with delight, his own admiration of a beneficent Creator, as discovered in the rich variety of his works, habitually led him to excite a similar feeling in the minds of others. A shell, a stone, or a seemingly insignificant plant, furnished him with subjects on which instructively to dilate : for he loved to lead his hearers from created beauty, to reflect on that perfection which was without beginning, and will have no end. The productions and operations of nature he viewed as so many evidences of a wise and beneficent Being, who though perpetually opposed by his rebellious creatures, has mercifully designed and provided for the happiness of all. Possessing such sentiments, it may easily be supposed, that the rural avocations to which he had been trained, inspired him with pleasures unknown to those of less cultivated minds. Through the fine old ashes in front of his windows, (which he sometimes appropriately denominated the trees of his forefathers,) how often have I seen him gaze with solemn admiration on the splendour of a setting sun, or behold with similar emotion the magnificence of a starry sky ! ”

The subjoined memorandums, written at different intervals, appear worthy of being preserved.

“ 1808, 6 *mo.* 26.—As many words of our own prevent our hearing distinctly the outward voice of others, so do the cogitations of the mind prevent our distinguishing those spiritual motions, and hearing that still, small

voice, by which our individual religious duties are discovered to us: therefore the necessity of silence in both cases.

“ As it is perfectly consistent with every divine attribute that there should be, so I verily believe there is an immediate spiritual intercourse between the soul of man and its Creator, by which communication his soul is introduced into unity with its Divine source, and into sympathy with its fellow-creatures,—is informed, chastised, or comforted, suffers or reigns, according as its state, and the state of others may require.

“ It seems as if there was at times an exercise on behalf of others produced in the mind, which, like the wind that bloweth when and where it listeth, cometh on and goeth off we scarcely know how; and yet the sound of it is heard with sufficient clearness to warrant our moving under its influence in religious endeavours to promote the glory of our Creator, and the spiritual good of mankind.

“ 1808, 8 mo. 2.—It occurred to me this morning, whilst engaged in mental retirement and prostration of soul before Him who scrutinizes not only our actions but our thoughts, and whose piercing eye divides as it were between joints and marrow, and penetrates into the inmost recesses of our deceitful hearts, that to affect the use of high-flown, and what are called learned expressions, for the sake of displaying either our natural or acquired abilities, or to please the itching ears of men, is equally reprehensible with the use of gay clothing, or sumptuous furniture, and

is only another shape of pride and ostentation ; and of this fault, O my soul, thou hast great need especially to beware.

“ Sitting at breakfast, my mind was bowed in thankfulness for the plentiful and comfortable table, which Providence in the riches of his bounty enables me to spread for my dear children, whilst thousands of perhaps far more worthy receivers are not so amply provided for ;—which humbles me under a deep sense of the very inadequate returns I seem able to make, though I hope I feel some degree of that contrition of heart, which He condescends not to despise.

“ 1826, 6 *mo.* 17.—I love to contemplate the Deity in the threefold character under which He has condescended to reveal himself for the benefit of lost and sinful man, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; but I seem the most profoundly to adore Him, as an infinite and incomprehensible unity—an ineffable and unapproachable glory,—an unutterable and incommunicable name. ‘ I am that I am,’ said the Lord to Moses. (Exod. iii. 14.)

“ 1828, 2 *mo.* 23.—On a view of the weakness and corruption of human nature, abstractedly considered, my poor mind has at seasons been brought to the borders of despair ; so that I have even been almost discouraged from lifting up either my eyes or my hands towards heaven, by a fear of hypocrisy, and under the solemn consideration, that the very thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord. Yet when by this humbling process I have become so far reduced as to prostrate myself at

the footstool of Divine mercy, as a helpless, hopeless sinner, my plea, though oftentimes a silent one, has not been rejected by the sinner's Friend. 'He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.' He has had compassion on me; and blessed be his holy name for ever, has raised the beggar from the dunghill, and permitted me again to live in his sight. And let not such an experience as this appear strange to the reader, seeing 'no man can keep alive (unto God) his own soul.'

"1828, 4 mo. 15.—As the bullock unaccustomed to the yoke is generally impatient at its being laid upon him, so man under the early visitations of affliction, or the first restraints of the cross, is uneasy at their weight, and reluctant to bear them. Resistance, however, proving vain, and only increasing the suffering, submission is at length resorted to, as affording the only prospect of relief; and well it is for us when we are thus wise, as death or destruction might be expected to follow an unavailing and continued opposition. 'Who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?' And when this submission, another name for resignation, is accompanied by prayer, then our trouble, whatever be its nature, becomes transformed into the light and easy yoke of Christ Jesus our Lord. Through his assistance, vouchsafed to our humble petitions, we learn to bear the burden of it cheerfully;—we go forth to the portion of labour assigned us with willingness, or bend under our secret sorrows, if these be our lot, without repining. Blessed and happy experience!

“ Paul may plant and Apollos water, but it is God who giveth the increase. (1 Cor. iii. 6.) The Lord expects his servants to labour in their respective callings, and perform their required duties, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature, with as much industry and diligence as if the success of their endeavours were at their own command; but this success is notwithstanding a part of his own prerogative, which He reserves for himself. We must therefore strive as if everything depended on ourselves, yet we should also assuredly believe that God only can give the increase. So equally true it is, that although man may build and watch a city, it is the Lord only who can keep and preserve it from innumerable perils.

“ 1833, 11 *mo.*—A poor, irresolute and fallen creature, is desirous of obtaining a crown immortal, by ‘fighting the good fight of faith,’ against those potent enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil;—the *world*, in all its seductive and terrific vicissitudes, the *flesh* in its corruptions, and the *devil*, in the plenitude of his malevolence and power. O ! merciful and omnipotent Lord God, be pleased to assist a trembling sinner in this unequal warfare, or the victory can never be obtained; but through thy aid in Christ Jesus, we may be made more than conquerors. With Thee, all things are possible, and thy strength is made perfect in human weakness. As without Thee nothing that is truly good can prosper, so against thy holy will and power, nothing that is evil shall ever be able to prevail.

“ 1833, 11 *mo.*—O most gracious God ! Be pleased for thy great Name’s sake, thy dear Son’s sake, and my immortal

soul's sake, to forgive the manifold infirmities of a vain and roving imagination. Pardon, I humbly and reverently pray Thee, the mighty sins of my youth by actual transgression ; and if it be not too much to implore even of thy infinite mercy, love me freely. When I groan the unspeakable groan, incline thine ear to hear ; when I shed—alas, how seldom !—the tear of contrition, put it into thy bottle ; and if ever at thy command, and by the assistance of thy grace, I have performed the least work of faith and obedience, let it be recorded in thy book of remembrance, that through the intercession of thy appointed Mediator, I may finally be emboldened to render up my account, with humble confidence and trembling joy.

“Of all the weights and burdens which the Christian traveler has to bear in his pilgrimage through this world, perhaps on a due estimate, none will be found to be heavier than himself ; nor anything which in the retrospect oppresses him with greater sorrow and a deeper humiliation than the sense of his own unworthiness—a word of no lofty sound, yet when contemplated in its causes, its effects, and its associations, of very comprehensive and significant import.

“I am aware that both in speaking and writing, I may often seem to take a low view of human nature, and of religious society. But when I consider the description of the heart of man, as given by Him who best knew it ; when I contemplate the beatitudes and the woes of the Gospel, as pronounced by the same high authority ; or when I turn from these, and fix my attention on the states to which the precious promises and awful threatenings of the Old Testament Scriptures were addressed, (without adverting to my

own experience,) I find myself justified in the conclusion, that humility was made for man, but pride was *not*, and that in all stations and circumstances into which he can possibly be brought, it especially becomes his precarious and dependent condition.

“ 1834, 10 *mo.* 8.—The noble faculty of human reason, or the understanding of man, abstractedly considered, capable of improvement as it confessedly is, still has its boundaries and limitations; and it is of much importance to ascertain as far as possible what these limits are; as it is no little disparagement to reason, and often attended with danger, both to ourselves and others, to apply it to subjects, especially in religion and philosophy, to which it is incompetent. It is either on doubtful questions, ambiguous expressions, or certain abstruse oppositions of science, falsely so called, that the sophist and the infidel lay the foundation of that structure, which they proudly as vainly imagine shall reach up to heaven; but which, however specious or fair in appearance, yet being built on the sand, will neither be able to withstand the shock of the tempest, nor endure the penetrating effulgence of the sun of righteousness. Before these every Babel must fall, and those who build it will be confounded, even as Dagon of old fell prostrate before the ark of the Lord.”

Some time before his death, our beloved friend gave up his farm to his eldest son, and retired to a small comfortable house close by, where he spent many of the declining years of life. This peaceful dwelling was at a little distance on the left hand, from the high road from Long Sutton to Holbeach.

In the early part of the second month, 1835, he was taken alarmingly ill whilst on a visit to one of his sons ; and for several days there appeared to himself and those about him but little prospect of his recovery. Throughout the whole of this illness, during which his sufferings were at times very severe, he was mercifully preserved in great patience, and resignation to the Divine will. To a friend who visited him he remarked, "When the world is receding from us, and eternity opening to our view, how precious it is to have an interest in a Redeemer ! how delightful it is to know Him to be our Redeemer, our Mediator, our Advocate with the Father, and above all our Saviour !" As the prospect of a separation from his friends increased, he was very anxious to bear his testimony to the reality and efficacy of the immediate visitations of the Spirit of Truth, of the operations of which he gave some remarkable instances in his own experience.

After a few weeks, he so far recovered as to be able to return home, where his health and strength gradually improved. The evening before his death he spent very cheerfully with his family, and retired to rest as well as usual. About two in the morning, he was seized with violent pain in the chest, which continued with but little intermission for about an hour. During this time he was perfectly sensible, and at times supplicated for ease. This was mercifully granted about three, and after a few minutes of peaceful tranquillity, he gently ceased to breathe—on the first of the fourth month, 1835, in the seventy-sixth year of his age.

J. F.

Tottenham, 7th mo. 1841.

A Tribute to the Memory of Jonathan Hutchinson.

By J. J. Gurney.

“It was on a beautiful bright day of sunshine, when his favourite green Gedney looked greener than usual, that my late dear wife and myself attended the funeral of my beloved friend and father in the truth, Jonathan Hutchinson. A great many friends were convened from different places, and the villagers of the place and neighbourhood flocked in large numbers, and in their most decent dresses, to pay their last token of respect to ‘the best man of Gedney.’ ‘So the best man in Gedney is gone,’ said one poor labourer to another. ‘What!’ said the other, ‘is Mr. Hutchinson dead?’ His remains were deposited in a little family burying-ground, not very far from his own home, where his respectable though not wealthy predecessors had been laid in their turns during several generations, and which he had taken the pains to plant with considerable taste. Indeed it was truly remarkable with what skill this ardent and almost poetic lover of nature, had contrived to adorn, by judicious planting, the small estate of rich pasture land which he inherited from his ancestors, who had possessed and occupied the same little farm as he did for the period, as I understand, of about 200 years, never rising above or falling below the rank of reputable yeomen; and since the rise of Friends, members of that religious Society. Nothing can be said of the

picturesque appearance of low Lincolnshire ; but to this general remark, his little domain, cultivated and adorned as it was by its late beloved owner, forms a striking exception.

“ To revert to the funeral ; it was an occasion of precious, comforting solemnity. The meeting-house is at the distance of a mile from the place of interment ; but the assembled company followed the train of friends and relations, first to the meeting, and afterwards to the grave, in the most orderly manner. The meeting afforded a full opportunity for reverent waiting upon the Lord, and for the preaching of the glorious Gospel of our Holy Redeemer ; and at the grave, the thickening circle of friends and neighbours were again addressed ; all seemed united not only in a sense of their own great loss, but in some view and apprehension of his blessedness,—the blessedness of one who had lived and died in the Lord. The striking mark of affection and respect which was shown on that day by the inhabitants of a rather extensive district around his home, was obviously the result of the influence which is gradually obtained over a surrounding population by the weight of sound, practical, but unostentatious Christianity. The good man was gone ; the meek, kind, humble, generous neighbour was no more ; and many were they of every description who seemed ready to rally round his grave in the remembrance of his virtues.

“ Never did I meet with a fellow pilgrim towards the heavenly Zion, who was more acutely and more constantly alive to his own demerits. He used to tell me that this was a point on which his many afflictions peculiarly led him to dwell. ‘ Never mind,’ would he say ‘ I am fully aware that whatsoever it befalls me to suffer, I deserve it ; and

that whatsoever of comfort and happiness is cast into my cup of mixture, it is all of unmerited kindness and mercy.' He knew much of the depth of the fall of man, and of the extent and awfulness of his ruin by nature; and just in proportion to his visions and feelings on this subject, was his estimate of the infinite value of Jesus—Immanuel—the Saviour of mankind.

"It was at an early period of our acquaintance that we were companions on the committee of the Yearly Meeting appointed to try the appeal of the late Thomas Foster, who had been disowned for holding and propagating Unitarian sentiments. After the committee had come to the conclusion to confirm the disownment, and had settled down into deep and solemn silence, it was Jonathan Hutchinson who broke that silence in the following expressions: 'I know not how my brethren may be affected, but I heartily rejoice in the decision of the committee; for as it regards myself I can indeed say with truth, that without Christ I should be of all men most miserable.' These words indicated the constant tenor of his mind on the subject of religion; and whilst he never let down the standard of practical piety, and ever pleaded for that Divine influence which can alone prepare us for heaven, he was anxious that in the declarations and writings of his friends, the door should be left fully open for the poor penitent who even at the eleventh hour, even in his latest extremity, like the thief on the cross, should turn with all his heart and in simple faith, to Him in whom dwells all the fulness of saving righteousness and forgiving mercy.

"He was humble in a larger and deeper sense of the expression than is often the case even with experienced

Christians, and looked back with many tears, and sometimes with conflict of spirit, to the wanderings of his early days. I am not aware that he ever indulged in the vices, or even much of the gaiety of the world ; but his imagination was fertile, he was of a contemplative turn of mind : and he was at one time during his early manhood much inclined to a hard-hearted speculative unbelief, a state of mind closely connected with the pride of intellect, and an almost obstinate unwillingness to sacrifice his independence, and to bow his neck under the yoke of Christ. He spent much of his time, I believe, in solitary rides over the country, when his mind had full leisure to roam at large in those regions of dangerous speculation to which he was prone ; but the Lord met with him on his way by some remarkable visitations, and thus brought him home to himself in the ever-blessed covenant of light and life.

“ Living in a retired village, the principal member of a very small meeting, and belonging to a Quarterly Meeting, the members of which were by no means numerous, and scattered over an extensive district, our dear friend enjoyed far less frequent opportunities of religious association than fall to the lot of many of his brethren. He presented a remarkable example of that silent growth in grace, of that gradual deepening of the root, and unfolding of the precious plant above, which is sometimes effected by virtue of the dews and rains of heaven with very little of human instrumentality—the advancing process being little perceptible from day to day to the beholders, much less to the individual who is growing, but nevertheless real, ‘ first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.’ I have often found occasion to observe in visiting friends in various

parts of the country, that it is not always those who have the greatest advantages in point of outward administration who make the greatest progress in the Truth. I have sometimes found brethren and sisters in solitary places— young people as well as old—who very seldom enjoyed the privilege of hearing the Gospel preached, but who nevertheless were evidently living under the enlivening, guiding, and restraining influences of the Holy Spirit. Just such was eminently the subject of this memoir ; though he had once been a revolter against the Lord, and though but little of human help fell to his portion, he had his blessed share in the fulfilment of that gracious promise, ‘ I will be as the dew unto Israel : he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.’

“ While the experience of very many in our Society affords a proof of the excellence of those principles which tend to wean us from every arm of flesh, and to bring us into immediate dependence on Him in whom are our *springs*, there is nothing in this experience which in any degree justifies the neglect of those lawful and profitable means of religious edification which our heavenly Father has placed within our reach. Among the most important of these means is the perusal of the Holy Scriptures. Our late beloved friend was diligent in the performance of this duty—a duty which perfectly coincided with that devotional taste which now marked his character. He loved the Scriptures, as containing the message of his God, a message unutterably dear to him because it testified of Christ ; nor were any parts of the volume so precious to him, as those which set forth the helplessness and corruption of fallen man on one hand, and the treasures of redeeming love on the other. The humi-

liations of David, and the love, faith, and allegiance of Paul, were equally familiar to his penitent spirit.

“Another means of spiritual benefit in the use of which Jonathan Hutchinson was remarkably diligent was the regular attendance of his meetings, both for worship and discipline. In order to be present at the latter, in which his weight of character and sound discretion gave him large influence, he was accustomed to pass much of his time in travelling; for his Monthly Meeting was generally held at places considerably distant from Gedney, and his Quarterly Meetings at Lincoln, fifty miles from his home. No inclemency of weather, no controlable inconvenience, prevented his regularly attending these meetings, greatly to the comfort of his friends; nor was the time passed in solitude on the road an idle time to him. His thoughts and contemplations were upon God, upon his people, upon his precious cause.

“I never knew Jonathan Hutchinson as a husband, for his wife was dead before our acquaintance commenced; but I can testify that he was a tender, affectionate, careful father. With his two daughters, Rachel and Lydia, he kept up an intimate, individual friendship. They both married, and died in their confinement: Lydia in her father's lifetime, Rachel after his death. Their memory is dear to me; for they were worthy of their parent, and fondly cherished him as the object of their unfeigned reverence as well as love. He was a person of far too good sense to attempt an escape from his true sphere of life, or to neglect the business by which he maintained his family. He was a skilful, practical farmer, exceeded, I believe, by none of his neighbours in such matters; yet he

was very far superior to the generality of persons of his class in point of intellectual cultivation. He read much and variously, and thought deeply and largely on many subjects; nor did he neglect the wholesome cultivation even of the imagination. He was fond of poetry, and I venture to assert that the beauties of nature were to him clothed in almost double brightness. No man better understood the meaning of the poet's words, 'My Father made them all.'

"With such pursuits, tastes, and habits of mind, and with a disposition remarkably formed for friendship, he was a choice companion to all who shared an intimate association with him, both old and young. One hour of *tête-à-tête* with him, never failed to be a source of pure pleasure to me; for the resources of his mind were rich, and the glow of religion was over them all. Our close agreement on all points of a religious nature, and on many of a merely intellectual character, was the means of bringing us into a near and easy friendship, which I shall, I believe, always look back upon as one of the choicest privileges of my life.

"Before I conclude, I would say a few words on the subject of his ministry. It was very peculiar, being a large gift in a few words. His communications were almost uniformly very short; seldom continued for more than a few minutes; but they were remarkably full of matter, evangelical in substance, simple in manner, and lively through the power of the Holy Spirit. They were often that on which the contemplative mind might dwell for hours. In prayer he was fervent, humble, simple, and emphatic.

"A painful disease, I believe in the heart, carried him off very suddenly. The unexpected attack came on in the

course of the night, after he had retired to rest considerably better than usual. The pain was violent, though short ; and death ensued without the opportunity of any expression except a very short prayer, and I may add without a struggle. Surely this beloved friend, this humble devoted Christian rests in Jesus ; surely when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, he will appear with Him in glory. May I die the death of the righteous ; and may my last end be like his ! Amen and amen.

J. J. GURNEY."

*" On board the Monongahela, from
Liverpool to Philadelphia.
7 mo. 22, 1837."*

EXTRACTS, &c.

No. 1. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1807, 4 mo. 11.—I FEEL a liberty to give thee some account of my own journeying thus far through the devious paths of life. Although I received but a common education, yet I contracted at an early period a much greater inclination to the pursuit of abstract and metaphysical inquiries than simple and obvious truths. By this means, as might be expected, my incautious and inexperienced feet soon became entangled in the snares of that vain and false philosophy which, according to the beautiful language of the poet, only “leads to bewilder and dazzles to blind,” and so perplexes the mind with shade after shade, that doubt succeeding doubt, like still ascending mountains, at length presents an awful and almost inaccessible barrier between the soul and its God.

Well, my dear friend, through this land of darkness and shadow of death I have wandered, where none knows but myself, and few could believe what I met with. Suffice it at present to say, that even here Divine mercy and regard were manifested for my deliverance, sometimes by the melting language of invitation and love, and at others by stripe deservedly succeeding stripe. But alas! I had

become such an enemy to the Cross, and was so desirous of finding an easier way to the kingdom than by it, that it was not until I had tried almost everything, and was reduced by the mere force of mental affliction, that I could be prevailed upon to submit to its salutary discipline : since which,—as indeed infinite is the obligation,—I hope I have not been wilfully rebellious ; but though in much weakness and fear, yet I trust, in some good degree of simplicity and sincerity, I have endeavoured to run with patience the race that is set before me.

But that which has most particularly impressed me as matter for serious communication, is an apprehension that has for some time attended me, that in this day of too general departure from the ancient paths of simplicity and truth which our forefathers believed it their duty to walk in, those who may be designed by Infinite Wisdom to support the characters of such judges as the first, and such counsellors as were found in the beginning of our Society,—and who from the fewness of their numbers, and the solitude of their situations, may be compared to one of a city, and two of a family,—will have to go *deep into suffering*. And though it is very far from my design, either to weaken or depreciate the strong and tender ties of natural affection, domestic endearment, or social love, which not only form what is most estimable in the bond of outward union, but as sweeteners of the mingled cup of life are enjoyments which I believe religion allows us freely to partake of,—yet I also believe that some of those who are obedient to the call above mentioned, will have to pass through trials similar to what not unfrequently have attended newly-convinced persons, experiencing the truth of our Lord's declaration, that He came not to send peace on earth, but a

sword. This at first sight appears so hard a saying, that we are ready to say, Who indeed can bear it? yet though the trial still remains, the difficulty seems much reconciled by considering that the difference in question is of a nature which does not lessen the affection of the true disciple towards those from whom he may nevertheless feel himself bound to dissent, both in judgment and practice; though for a time, for want of being fully understood by them, it may fare with him as with the apostle formerly, "The more he loves, the less he is loved."

This is a situation which surely may be compared to Jacob's trouble, wherein the mind, clothed with unusual sensibility, and peculiarly alive to every tender impulse and painful emotion, feels a contemptuous look, or a reproachful word, to be like a sharp sword, aiming, and alas often too successfully, a wounding blow at the heart, which seems to exceed in poignancy and anguish, even what we have ever conceived to be the pangs of natural death, and which we also feel to be dangerous. O may it never be destructive to that spiritual life, which is hid from the wise and prudent of this world; for did they behold it, charity inclines us to hope, they would not thus persecute it.

In these seasons of deep probation, may we remember for our encouragement, that the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings,—that he was treated with every kind of ignominy and insult, and finally in the opinion of men led to a shameful and inglorious death. And may the remembrance of these things animate us with fresh courage to renew our endeavours to follow him even to Calvary, bearing his reproach.

I hope thou wilt not consider what has dropped from me

on these serious subjects as calculated to throw unnecessary gloom or difficulty upon the narrow way which leads to life. I am, at least if I know my own heart, very differently disposed, and would, were it possible, as many are vainly endeavouring to do, strew it with flowers; but I know too well the folly of such an attempt. I think I have found, by an experience purchased at no easy rate, that the divine truths of the Christian religion will not bend to accommodate the selfish views of the natural man. No, immovable as the rock from whence they sprang, they will, like it, for ever bid defiance to all the opposition which the united powers of violence and sophistry can bring against them. What I then so earnestly covet, and which seems to be the ground of my present exercise for myself and for thee, is, that we may become more and more firmly established in these inestimable, essential, and unchangeable truths; that our hearts may indeed become fixed, trusting in the Lord alone; and that we may be so built upon Him, as never more to be separated from his love.

No. 2. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1808, 2 *mo.* 26.—In those trying moments which I have lately had to pass through,* wherein my feeble nature, exhausted and trembling under the sudden, unexpected, and awful stroke which she had sustained, reclined by turns her weary head upon every breast from whence she could hope for a little of that consolation which true friendship affords,—in this season of affliction thou wast brought

* This has allusion to the loss of his beloved wife, who had died a few weeks previously, after a very short and suffering illness.

to my mind with such an assurance of thy sympathy, that to have followed the impulse of my first feelings, I believe I should have transmitted to thee, in common with my nearest relations and friends, early information of the removal of my beloved companion, with the intended time of her interment ; but on reasoning a little upon it, and not seeing what should bear me out in using such a freedom, I declined it, and thereby it seems as if I had deprived myself and my friends of thy acceptable company on that solemn occasion. This having been the case, induces me to make nearly my first attempt upon paper since that time, to acknowledge the receipt of thy kind and sympathizing lines, which I think were as consoling to me as anything of a similar nature could be expected to be, at the same period of time.

It may perhaps afford thee some satisfaction to know, that I and my little helpless children have been remembered by divers of our dear relations and friends, from some of whom we have received kind testimonials of sympathetic regard ; and I trust I may without presumption add, that the desires they have affectionately expressed for my support have been measurably fulfilled. My mind, after recovering its first shock, though greatly reduced, even to the state of considering myself little better than a reptile of creation, has notwithstanding been so far preserved in quietude and contrition, as seldom to be entirely bereft of a hope, that proved like an anchor in those storms, which in times of outward weakness and inward trial are apt to assail, and at seasons almost threaten to overwhelm us. So that on taking a general retrospect of my life, which, though obscure has not been without its vicissitudes, and considering how often I have been mercifully preserved

from suffering shipwreck, I can address Him who has helped me in this grateful language, "For all I thank Thee:" but when I go into a still deeper recollection of some particular circumstances that have attended me, and consider the chastisement I have justly incurred, with the violence which has been necessary to rend the attachments of my heart from this world, under these impressions I feel almost strength enough to kiss the rod, and to add, with faltering utterance, "most for the severe."

No. 3. To HERBERT AND MARY CAMM.

Welbourn, 1808, 4 mo. 6.—Does it not seem that the principal object of our greatest affliction, in connection with the lesser every-day trials to which we are exposed, is to reduce us, or to try if we be reduced, to a passive acquiescence under the varied dispensations of Providence, so that whilst we retain a sensibility that may be almost said to be tremblingly alive, our wills may be so far lost and absorbed in the love of the Divine will, that we shall receive suffering or rejoicing therein with an equal mind? But alas! whilst I am thus describing that excellent state which in theory appears so beautiful;—and realized, would perhaps be little short of the "mark for the prize," I am compelled to blush at my own infantile attainments. Though I may thankfully acknowledge that those emotions of nature occasioned by the sudden and unexpected stroke which deprived me of a beloved companion, have been succeeded by a greater degree of calm and contrite submission than, considering my manifold infirmities and imperfections, I could have reasonably expected. So that I have at seasons been enabled with tears to put up my petition to

the following import: "O Lord, if it please Thee, look down with compassionate regard on thy poor creature on whom it has pleased Thee once more to lay thine hand in affliction, and let his helpless offspring become objects of thy tender care. Forget not to be gracious to a being, who though but a worm, is yet also a part of thy rational creation—a being not only formed by thy marvellous power, but upheld and supported in existence, from his cradle to the present day, by thy goodness and long-suffering mercy." My feelings almost prevent my writing with tolerable correctness; you will make allowance for me, and perhaps be just able to form a little judgment how it is with me. When it fares well with you, remember me.

No. 4. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1808, 7 *mo.* 28.—I find the present clouded, dark, and rainy day is but too emblematic of the state of my mind; and whilst I sigh complaint to Him who seeth in secret, I am impelled by an inclination, I will not say an allowable one, to pour some of the effusions of a still afflicted heart, into the sympathetic bosom of a friend. But what shall I say? Privileged beyond thousands of perhaps more deserving fellow-creatures, can I say anything that will not border upon murmuring? and ought I not rather to lay my hand upon my mouth? Oh! my dear friend, the last few months of my life, as thou knowest, have been fraught with vicissitudes the most painful to nature; and these have produced an experience which, whilst it seems to baffle description, has excited the desire that, if consistent with a wisdom which I believe we both acknowledge to be inscrutable, may never be thine.

I look at my dear little children; I look at the world: I review that part of my pilgrimage already passed, and I anticipate, though with much uncertainty, that which is involved in futurity; and with this affecting prospect of things, I am ready to tremble for myself and for them. Under this deep and solemn exercise, I think the greatest relief I have found, has arisen from feeling just able to make this appeal: "Lord! I acknowledge the justice of thy correcting hand, and I still desire submissively to bow under the various turnings thereof upon me.

29th.—Believing, and almost regretting the degree of suffering into which thy mind may be introduced by what I wrote yesterday, I wish to make thee a partaker of a little consolation which I seem to have received, by finding my mind, on waking early this morning, covered with contrition, and enabled to breathe, on behalf of myself and my dear children, for preservation from the evils of this world. And whilst under this exercise, the recollection that this was one of the petitions which our dear Lord when on earth put up for his disciples, and what He also instructed them to pray for on their own account; I was encouraged upon the whole to emerge a little from the depth of that conflict into which my mind has of late been unusually baptized, and once more to lift up my head in humble hope. Marvellous indeed are the dealings of the Lord with us poor creatures of the dust!

No. 5. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1808, 8 mo. 10.—I received thy truly acceptable letter yesterday, to which I think I have more reason than thou hadst to mine to apply the epithet of "grateful," because

it not only conveyed what I intended, the language of friendship, but it also contained, what mine had not to boast, that of instructive consolation. Yes, my dear friend, I mean no flattery when I say, it was to me like a drop of balm distilling upon a lacerated breast.

I think with thee, that a desire to know, and an endeavour to do, the business of the present hour, is about "the amount of our allotment;" and in answer to thy query, 'Do we gain much strength by looking at what may be?' I think I can experimentally answer, 'Indeed we do not;' to which I may also add, that I have not unfrequently been driven, as to a last resource, to the consolatory encouragement of the text thou hast quoted, "Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof." But notwithstanding all my knowledge of these things, and my seeming sometimes almost established in the present truth, I am apt to flag, and find not only my best theories, but former experience, unavailing to keep my mind wound up to that pitch of faith, and its concomitant virtue, patience, which is I believe necessary to our religious progress; so that I can very feelingly adopt the remarkable language of our dear ancient friend Thomas Ross in his last illness, that of all the difficulties attendant on his passage through life, he found it one of the greatest when he was right to keep so.

In consequence of the Yearly Meeting's Minute, the subjects of the fourth query were brought under the consideration of Friends at the Monthly Meeting at —, and I thought it safest for me to endeavour to press the importance and propriety of consistency in religious character. In doing this, I mentioned my observation of the nice manner in which the world scrutinized our conduct, and with what triumphant and exulting scorn it looked down

upon us when that conduct was not consistent with our principles ; for though it might affect to smile at the singularity into which a faithful adherence to these principles might lead, yet in reality it respected them.

On sitting down, it seemed to me that I had used a plainness of speech which perhaps might offend ; and as I do not like to give offence, I became rather uncomfortable on that score. But on turning things over a little in my mind, a query arose, What then must be done ? Must I seek reconciliation with the world, and the spirit of it ? No, rather let me fly for refuge into a deeper resignation to bear its reproach ; and let the reputation of pleasing men, and of walking after the course of this world, though once almost as dear to me as life, become of less and less value in my eyes, enabling me to adopt that crucifying language of a pious writer,—I think Cambray,—expressed nearly in these words, “ Let them [the children of this world] despise, let them abhor me, let them trample upon me as upon the graves of the dead.” I believe thou wilt not infer from my writing thus, that I wish to encourage a severe and uncharitable behaviour towards others. No, I believe even those who ought to be apt to teach, should also, by their gentleness and patience towards all men, endeavour to demonstrate that religion is not less amiable than it is essential and excellent ; and yet I apprehend it necessary that our minds be so fortified—and by what more likely means than a willingness to suffer—as sometimes in the ability received to contend for the faith, and against that which opposes it, in words which neither man’s wisdom nor inclination teaches.

No. 6. To ELIZABETH STORR.

1808, 11 *mo.* 14.—The thought of its being possible that I still may retain an interest in the minds of such as, taught by their own trials, can sympathize in mine, sheds at seasons a cheering ray through the gloom which frequently hangs over my drooping, though I hope I need not say, disconsolate soul. I have nothing to boast of—quite the reverse; nor does it, I think, proceed from an affectation of humility, when I express a belief, founded upon a calm and dispassionate retrospect of my life, that few have so much cause for abasement as myself. And yet it hath pleased Him, whose will I believe is not more his own glory than our happiness, to deal marvellously and mercifully with me; and though, in the course of my pilgrimage, the rod has been often stretched over me, yet the staff has also in times of extremity been graciously afforded; so that I may say, Hitherto have I been helped, or I must have fallen. And though I have been dealt with in a manner which has made me almost like a wonder to myself, yet at the same time it has been in a manner which I think warrants me to encourage other poor wanderers through this vale of tears to trust in the Lord. For seeing his ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts, it is frequently by means at a time unlooked for, that help is afforded to those who truly trust in Him.

No. 7. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1809, 3 mo. 18.—Having since I wrote last, in company with a few other friends, been engaged in visiting the families of Friends in our monthly meeting, I thought I was just free to tell thee that we got through better than I believe any of us had anticipated, for we had viewed this service at a distance in rather a formidable light. I am in no boasting disposition, but I would add, that as we went along, an affectionate desire for the welfare of our friends accompanied us from house to house, which seemed to be rather productive of an uniting than a scattering influence, which leads me to hope that it was a degree of our Heavenly Father's love, shed abroad in our hearts, towards our brethren. . Indeed I believe his paternal arm is at the present day stretched out to the gathering of us as a people nearer to Himself and to one another.

Whilst writing on this subject, and viewing those infirmities and imperfections which perhaps not only myself, but many of my dear fellow-professors have to deplore, I am ready to utter the petition, "Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servants; for in thy sight shall no flesh be justified." Yet I am not dismayed by this awful consideration, my past experience (and as it is one neither calculated to excite nor nourish vanity, I perhaps may be allowed to mention it,) of the Divine long-suffering is such; and so firm is my belief, that if we *will*, we *may* yet be gathered, that notwithstanding all opposition from within and without, both which I know to be powerful, my spirit is mercifully permitted to repose in "penitential peace and cheerful hope."

No. 8. TO RICHARD COCKIN.

1809, 3 *mo.* 30.—Thy kind letter of the 19th, and the expressions of sympathy and friendship which it contained, were not only truly acceptable, but also strengthening to my mind. For though I hope I am desirous of preservation from a discontented and murmuring disposition, I am nevertheless often in so poor and reduced a state as to seem in need of every help from every quarter. I was pretty much in this situation when thy lines dropped in, I trust seasonably, to my consolation and relief. It is indeed, amongst many others, a great favour to the young traveller, (for such, though I have been long feebly struggling I cannot but consider myself,) that there are in the church those whom experience can qualify to communicate a word in season to him who scarcely knows which way to direct his feet. Believing thee to be one of those fathers, to thee I may confidentially say that such is not unfrequently the case with me; and though, when I look at the gracious dealings, and particularly the forbearance and long-suffering of our Heavenly Father towards me, I am ready to say, “What can be done that has not been done for me? Surely goodness and mercy, infinite as they are, must have been almost exhausted, and the hand of divine justice suspended and withheld in a very remarkable manner from punishing the sins and follies of my youth.” Yet, on the other hand, upon considering my infirmities, both of flesh and spirit, with the malevolent and unremitting endeavours of him who, from very early life, has sought my destruction, hunting me even through the retreats of solitude, like a partridge upon the mountains;—when I take this view I am ready to tremble,

and really to fear that one day or other I shall certainly fall by the violent and deceitful hand of my soul's enemy. However, as I think I am convinced by something more than theory, that this will do no good, and that if difficulties are not encountered they cannot be overcome; I therefore endeavour to [maintain] the warfare, and sometimes am favoured with a hope, that, through the assistance of Him who, though He may at seasons suffer us to be hard put to it, still beholds us with an eye of pity and love, I shall ultimately be made victorious; though so sharp has this conflict often been, as to cause many a silent tear to drop as upon the bosom of the earth, and many a groan unutterable to escape from my oppressed heart, and mix with the passing wind. But secret as these have been, and unknown to mortals, they are not, I trust, unnoticed by Him before whom a book of remembrance is written of all the exercises of those who are endeavouring to follow Him through many tribulations, and who, having Himself been tried like as we are, is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and knows how to succour and sustain, even in the hour of peril and dismay, those who are tried and tempted.

I hope thou wilt not understand anything I have said as the [language] of complaint, from which, under all my difficulties, I have been mercifully preserved; never having [dared] to say to Him, who hath repeatedly smitten, 'What doest thou?' and even whilst writing this my spirit is contrited and prostrated under his humbling [hand, and willing] there to remain, however mortifying and crucifying to all that is human in me. O my dear friend, pray for me, that in this I may continue firm, and that my faith and patience may not fail.

No. 9. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1809. 4 mo. 21.—There was one of my speeches, when last at your quarterly meeting, and that perhaps one of the best, with which I am at the present hour particularly disposed to find fault. My observations on the deficiency of attending meetings, as remarked in some of the answers, were not, as to the *manner*, satisfactory to me; though I am not even now aware that my expressions wanted changing, as I think they only went to this point—that a neglect in attending religious meetings proceeded chiefly from a want of sufficient love and fear of the Supreme Being. I thought, after sitting down, and continue to think, whenever it revolves in my mind, that on this occasion my manner had something in it, which, though more the effect of inattention than design, was too *assuming*; and that my voice was not enough modulated by the *gentleness* with which our endeavours to persuade one another, concerning the things of righteousness and peace, ought to be expressed; and perhaps, if I had been sufficiently attentive to the intimation of that wisdom which is pure and full of love, I might have had to make this humiliating acknowledgment before the breaking up of the meeting. I am sorry for this omission, if it was one; and I think thankful for the sense given me of my fault.

Is it not said there is an acquired taste naturally, and that we may by habit come to relish what has formerly been disagreeable to us? And, if so, is it not at least possible that, by repeated draughts of spiritual bitters, we may become reconciled to them also? I am willing to hope that passing through many tribulations has purchased

for me this experience; and that not only the mercies, but the judgments of the Lord are at length become sweet to my taste, yea, sweeter than the honeycomb;—not only more delectable than those unhallowed, yet fascinating gratifications, which in early life I partook of with too much avidity; but transcending also the more rational, yet less objectional sources of satisfaction, which, even in riper years, we are very apt, without great care, too much to indulge in.

No. 10. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1809, 7 *mo.* 16.—Thou art right in supposing me a man of a fearful heart, which, to my own mind, as it is seldom any difficulty to compromise with self, I can account for many ways; and probably a few, at least, of those various causes, both physical and religious, may appear so obvious to thee as to render any further description of them superfluous. To speak, therefore, only generally—are not hope and fear those passions which, in proper exercise, tend most of all others to keep us in equilibrium? and from too great a preponderance of either of them, do not some of our spiritual dangers arise? In ascending the towering heights of presumption and self-confidence, do not our minds acquire too firm and rigid a tone? and when we sink below measure into imperceptible depression, do we not then, like the lyre unstrung, become incapable of giving forth a sound, either instructive or harmonious? Of the latter thou hast discovered in thy friend, though not new to himself, a striking illustration; and almost the only present comfort he is able to take, under the discouragement which his example affords, is in the hope that

the Christian traveller's fears, even when they verge to an extreme, have sometimes a good foundation; love and gratitude to his heavenly Benefactor, creating a reluctance to offend on the one hand, and a deep sense of the liability thereto, to which the corruptions and infirmities of his nature continually expose him, on the other; and seeing that adequate help is afforded to the watchful, I do not mean to advance this as a sufficient excuse for an erratic course; rather would I excite *us*, when, under the influence of our fears—(from which I do not think thou art entirely free)—we see ourselves in danger either to loiter or stray, to endeavour, with as little confusion or emotion as possible, to regain the way cast up, and patiently walk therein, with renewed confidence in that goodness, which is too vast for finite comprehension, and which, perhaps, is best understood and explained by its own precious influences, those influences that at seasons are so mercifully vouchsafed, even to the weak and erring mind.

I particularly notice what thou sayest in thy last, respecting thy own dismay at things moving so heavily along among you. I am not surprised at it, neither am I equally concerned for thy feelings, as for the cause;—believing that, although our Divine Master does not overload the children in his family—the young disciples—yet, consistent with his wisdom, he adds to their burdens as strength increases. Viewing thy exercises in this light, I draw the encouraging inference, that thy capacity for burden-bearing is increasing, and that thy eyes are gradually opening to objects which might have been too strong and too powerful for a more youthful vision.

No. 11. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1809, 10 *mo.* 28.—As to hope, even that of the hypocrite, I do not know that I need accuse myself, seeing I generally find it so difficult to keep hope of any sort alive in my breast. Indeed to thee I may say, in our reciprocal freedom, that one of my sorest conflicts is, and has been much of my life, with reiterated temptations, to cast it quite away. And I find, as perhaps thou mayst have also found, that by looking too much outward, either into the general state of the world, at the desolations in our Society, or upon the inexplicable nature of our own individual trials, these temptations acquire, at seasons, an almost invincible strength; so that, by a choice of difficulties of the most awful kind, we are compelled to adopt the apostle's practice, to avert our eyes from these discouraging prospects, and fix them upon things which are unseen and eternal—upon that power and wisdom which are from above, and which only can deliver us from temptation. Yes, my dear friend, though an admirer of the noble faculty of human reason, and, like minds of a similar cast, betrayed, as I often have been, by this admiration, into unprofitable theories; yet I think few have more painfully experienced its utter incompetence to guide us safely through this state of deep probation, or to preserve us in a situation of divine acceptance. I have often, very often, been brought down, as from the tree of knowledge, and the mountain of speculation, and reduced to extremity, wherein, as with the weakness of a little child, and the simplicity of a fool, I have, partly in broken expression, but more frequently in that language which can-

not be uttered, begged for preservation;—and that the Lord would not forsake me in my passage through this world, which, amidst all that beauty my heart has so much admired and enjoyed, has yet, in the course of its vicissitudes, often assumed in my view the form of a waste, howling wilderness. Somewhat after this manner, both for myself and my dear friends, wherever scattered outwardly or however captivated spiritually, I was, after a night partly spent in much exercise, enabled yesterday morning to supplicate with tears. This I esteemed a great favour, as not being at my own command, nor at all congenial to the natural hardness, or, if thou please, unbelief of my heart.

I observe, with concern, that the conflicts of — have terminated in a conclusion to leave the Society. Whatever they may think, I do not believe they will find a better, though perhaps, to the natural part, an easier way. This conclusion is not, I think, either the result of prejudice or education, but (with such abilities as I possess) of a careful investigation of the subject, with a strong natural propensity towards greater liberty than consistency with our profession allows. For the sake of a way less narrow, and perhaps partly aware and ashamed of my own deviations, than which nothing exposes us more to contempt, I have in early life wished I had not been born in the Society. In the folly and exultation of my inexperienced mind, I have said, I could not see the necessity of carrying a badge of Quakerism about me. And yet, after all this, I have been induced, from conviction, to submit to part with things which I once highly valued, and to take up others which I equally despised. And though I am willing to grant that our inconsistencies may

have been stumbling-blocks; yet I cannot believe that our principles, with all the restraints that they impose, can ever become so in any other view than that wherein Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness.

I also believe that those peculiar testimonies, as we generally call them, which distinguish us from other religious professions, stand upon an immutable foundation; being not only consonant with the doctrines of the Gospel, and with the rules of the purest morality, but with the deepest researches also, and the most sublime and profound philosophy, although at the latter observation I am aware that the world would smile. I will venture, however, to ask it, whether silent worship, for which we are perhaps as much distinguished and derided as for any peculiarity we possess,—I would ask the world whether this strange thing will not bear the trial I have proposed. If, therefore, I were to address these wanderers from our fold, it perhaps would be in the expostulatory language of our Lord, when many were departing from Him, “Will ye also go away?” reminding them also of Peter’s answer, “To whom shall we go?” and, without invidious comparison, when all things are fairly taken into account, not forgetting even our desolations, I think we may say on the present occasion, “To whom indeed shall we go?” I trust I can unite with thee in desire that the Truth might arise into dominion, in its own dignified authority; but we must be willing to wade through low and suffering times, in patience endeavouring to possess our souls, and thankful if our own lives are but mercifully given us for a prey.

No. 12. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1809, 12 *mo.* 16.—Shouldst thou ever have reason to suppose that I am indeed employed in any service by the great Head of the church, it is because He is still graciously pleased to raise up monuments of his mercy, and witnesses of his power in every age ; and that He sometimes takes these as from among the stones of the street ; because his dear Son came into the world to save sinners, of whom, though in nothing else, I venture to class myself with Paul the apostle ; and further, because in the depth of his unsearchable wisdom He chooses weak things and things that are not—nay, may it not be said, things worse than nothing ? for such I cannot but consider a sinful free agent. Yet by these we are warranted in believing the Omnipotent sometimes condescends to oppose the gigantic, though often erring wisdom of this world. And if ever thy poor unworthy friend should have part or lot in the important business of the Gospel entrusted to him, this is his character, and this is his pedigree, just as it stands unveiled in his own sight, at which, though somewhat perplexed, he does not despair.

The twofold effect which he hopes this finished but deformed exhibition and exposure of himself will produce upon thy mind is, first, to make thee careful never to view him in any other light, and that thou also fail not, as occasions may offer and appear to require it, to remind him of his original—the rock from which he has really been hewn, and the pit from whence he has indeed been digged.

No. 13. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1810, 1 *mo.* 5.—In following the late draft of love to my Norfolk friends, a hope somewhat cheering attends me, that my views were disinterested ; but what chiefly tends to console my lonely hours is the tender dealing of our Heavenly Father, who always, I believe, viewing the feeblest exertions of his children when directed to his honour, with compassionate regard, has been pleased for the most part since I left Norwich to withhold the condemnation—for which, as I rode quietly on my way homewards, whilst the tear of gratitude was at times ready to fall, the melody of the heart ascended to Him, whose holy, glorious, and fearful name stands, and I hope ever will stand, exalted in my view above all blessing and praise.

I think thou beginnest from one cause or other to know me too well to suppose that my original temperament consists of tender and weeping materials, and will therefore perhaps, as I also do, ascribe every symptom of religious sensibility to the purifying operations of the fire and the hammer. Canst thou not, my dear friend, rejoice with me in the hope, that after many painful and perilous wanderings, I have at length found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth ; and that, in the reduction and humiliation of nature, it is by his grace that I am what I am ? After these observations thou perhaps mayst not find it difficult to believe that my journey home, though long and lonesome, did not feel proportionately tedious.

No. 14. To ELIZABETH STORR.

1810, 1 *mo.* 23.—I trust our reciprocal regard, which has borne the trial of time and many changeful events, will not now, when life is verging towards its decline, forsake us ; but (should such make a part of the future felicity of the righteous, and we be happily numbered among them) I would rather hope that this mutual esteem may accompany us into regions celestial, where, with many a dear friend gone before us, we may unite in praising that great and worthy name, which has preserved through many tribulations and temptations, to his heavenly kingdom ; for it is through these, if admitted at all, that we must obtain an entrance.

Wherefore may we, my dear friend, not looking too much at those we have already passed through “as things which are behind,” rather endeavour after a pressing forward “toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” In this pursuit, may we with patience and resignation meet every event which may yet remain as a constituent portion of the full measure of our affections.

My mind has dwelt often in solitude ; and yet to this solitude, though naturally fond of society, I am become much more reconciled than some might suppose. Indeed, the solemnity of my introduction into deep mental retirement, and the repetition of strokes over which I had no control, seem, in a language at once dignified and awful, to have proclaimed acquiescence throughout every faculty of the mind. But though thus forbidden to complain, I am still left to feel ; to my severest feelings I endeavour to oppose a consideration of the many favours yet left me ;

among which I think none stands more exalted in my view, than the lengthened time afforded me as an opportunity for bewailing the follies and errors of my youth, and for endeavouring to work out, though at seasons attended with many fears, the most important business of the soul's salvation.

No. 15. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1810, 7 mo. 21.—As in religious communications, whether on paper or otherwise, I am at seasons made very solicitous that my speech or my writing may not be with enticing words of man's wisdom, and that I may know nothing in this way but Christ Jesus and Him crucified ; so I am also desirous, though almost despairing the attainment, that in the ordinary transactions of life, in my friendships, my business, and my unavoidable intercourse with the world, I may so abide under the power of this cross, that every thought, word, and deed may be to the glory of Him who has borne long with me, done much for me, and to whom my obligations may, without exaggeration, be said to be infinite. With this glorious mark for the prize of our high calling before me, I am often ready to groan under a feeling of my infirmities, but am at seasons a little supported by the consideration, that though we have no sufficiency of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, yet we have an omnipotent and all-sufficient Helper. May we by faithfulness, obedience, and cleaving close to Him be made full partakers both of the joys and benefits of his salvation and redeeming love.

No. 16. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1810, 9 *mo.* 10.—I might indeed, if not uncommonly dull, derive much instruction from the nature of my employment, of which perhaps few poetical lines are more justly descriptive than those which say

The farmer's life displays in every part
A moral lesson to the sensual heart :

and may we not with equal truth add, spiritual instruction also to the well-disposed and attentive mind? The husbandman, whilst exposed to the vicissitudes of the weather and the changes of the seasons, deeply interested also as he is in them, must have the fairest opportunity for making observation upon their effects. The lilies arrayed in simple yet elegant loveliness, and the ravens fed by the same providential hand, are familiar objects to his sight. And if I may once more boast, I do not remember a time when I have seemed to myself more disposed to be instructed by what we commonly call the operations of nature, than in the present very changeful summer, in which perhaps the feelings of the community at large have experienced as much fluctuation as we ever remember from the same causes. The late auspicious appearance for getting in the harvest has been particularly striking, being, if we may so speak, ushered in by a day as likely to create despondency in the farmer's mind as any I ever knew. What sentiments of gratitude and of confidence ought such a circumstance to inspire, teaching us in everything to give thanks; and to believe, that though wintry seasons are in wisdom ordained, and storms permitted to interrupt

even the tranquillity of summer's cheerful hours, yet these are but for an appointed time, and for a determinate purpose! The sun again breaks forth with undiminished splendour; the vegetable kingdom again expands with renewed beauty to his enlivening beams; the voice of the turtle and the singing of the birds are again heard in our land. May we then, under the most unfavourable appearances, learn to trust, and not be afraid with slavish and unprofitable fear.

Thy observations upon that sort of anxiety from which I often suffer, have induced me in my own way to attempt something like its analysis; by which I think I have already discovered a considerable portion of it to originate in those selfish regards, as to sufferings and enjoyments, which are incompatible with entire resignation to the divine will. Though I am willing, at the same time, to hope that another part of it may proceed from that fear which tends to keep the heart clean, and from a necessary jealousy over our naturally corrupt and deceitful hearts.

I apprehend we shall both acknowledge that we are at times rewarded beyond what we could ask or think; and still more beyond what we should presume to say we have deserved. This reward I believe thou wilt not regret to be informed was, as I apprehend, mercifully vouchsafed to me after we parted, in crossing "dreary Marshland" towards my own solitary habitation; though I cannot tell wherefore, except for being willing, I hope, to enter into brotherly sympathy with the few friends at Lynn; and, having known the heart of a wanderer, to pity the wanderers there.

On riding along, I was permitted not only to behold, but I trust in some measure to appreciate the value of a

privilege, which, judging by my own experience, I should conclude to be rare, that of being enabled not only to offer sacrifice in the secret and solemn sanctuary of the heart; but also as inhabitants of the material world, to worship the Creator of all things in the august temple of the universe, when divested of all narrow and selfish considerations we feel so forcibly our intimate union and connexion with all the workmanship of the Divine hand, that without reluctance we can say to corruption, "Thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister." In fine, when we so feelingly fraternize with universal nature, that towards existence generally our love seems unlimited as surrounding space; but towards man in particular our charity is as expansive and exalted, as the magnificent canopy of the overarching heavens.

No. 17. To JOSEPH AND JANE GURNEY.

1811, 1 *mo.* 9.—To pain my breast was no stranger in a journey lately taken, on beholding the dereliction of many from the good old way wherein our fathers walked and praised the Lord: whilst I at once pity and mourn over the subjects of this departure, I cannot help craving earnestly that our Society might become as it were more consolidated into one body, not only by profession but by practice—might acknowledge but one God, and his name One, and might act upon the full persuasion, that there is indeed but one Lord, one faith, and one baptism which can save, even the baptism or washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

No. 18. To JOSEPH GURNEY BEVAN.

1811, 3 *mo.* 17.—Whether to the effect of religious fellowship, to the sympathy of minds, which, though differently situated and circumstanced, may yet possibly possess some affinity of temperament, or to the social interest of a cotemporary mariner, not always indeed in sight, but traversing the ocean of time in the same direction, and bound to the same port;—to which of these, or whether to them all combined, I am at a loss to ascribe the inclination I feel to address thee in brotherly and affectionate freedom.

Ever since my knowledge of thee, for I can scarcely call it an acquaintance, I have felt towards thee a sincere regard, founded upon qualities which appeared to me to merit esteem. As the love of God in Christ Jesus has, I trust, been gradually magnified in my view, and love to the brethren consequently increased, this esteem has, not only for thee, but for all those who I have reason to suppose are engaged in the cause of truth and righteousness, refined, as it were, into a kinder affection and solicitude; so that, as I view some of these, by an increase of dedication and humility, preparing for immortality, their outward man at the same time tending to decay, I am at times affected by the anticipation of those feelings, which I apprehend will be mine, should it be my lot to survive them. In a silent and sleepless hour, the remembrance of you and the state of your health was lately brought before me, in the consideration whereof, desires arose that, as you approached the awful valley, your spirits might be favoured with adequate support, that they might be safely conducted through it, and received on its further confines by the welcome of

Him who has, I believe, been long the beloved of your souls, the chiefest of ten thousand in your view.

Though we have long personally known each other, yet as thou art probably but little acquainted with my mental history, and mayst therefore be ready to consider some of the foregoing expressions to be too strong or highly coloured, I am free to say, that, if a capacity to feel for others be any quality of mine, I have received it not so much by words as by things, and this in the house of mourning—my heart, naturally obdurate and unbelieving, having been brought to its present state of faith and love, whatever this may be, by repeated baptisms in the troubled yet healing waters of affliction. From one of these I am scarcely now emerging, having but within a few days returned home from watching the progress of a disorder, which conducted my eldest daughter, about fifteen, to the silent grave. Though I tenderly loved her, yet I am probably more affected by a sense of loss, from the disappointed hope which this loss has occasioned; having indulged the fond hope, that this dear girl, who had finished her education, and under the care of valuable relations was receiving domestic instruction, might in a few years have succeeded her late mother as the female head of my family, the pleasant companion of her elder brother, the instructress of my younger children, and (where, alas! does not hope lead us!) the solace of my declining days, for all which she held out very promising expectations. So that thou wilt not, I think, be surprised to hear me say that nature feels much on this occasion; but blessed be the Lord, who does not forsake, but enables me to bend under it, both by affording me the very consoling belief, that the dear departed child is entered into rest, and by

superadding the tender sympathy of several dear and affectionate friends, and, may I add? by tendering my spirit before Him.

Apprehending that even to the pilgrim who is provided in the most ample manner for his journey a cup of water may sometimes be palatable, and that this simple draught may, perhaps, never be more grateful than from the hand which has not more to give;—thus recommended, I venture to hope that the present little effusion of love may not prove wholly unacceptable, should it only present to thy view one more of thy hitherto secretly sympathizing and affectionate friends.

No. 19. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1811, 3 *mo.* 23.—The expression of thine and thy wife's sympathy, which, with a similar offering from another hand, met me at Holbeach on my return from the burial of my dear daughter Mary, were, I have thought, equally kind and seasonable in contributing to counteract a depression which, notwithstanding all my endeavours after resignation, I find it difficult properly to bear up against.

Former experience has convinced me that, though we may have to travel over dreary ground, we must not think of taking up a rest here, indeed that no rest can be found upon it, but more probably a total discomfiture and overthrow both of faith and practice, and I am not even yet willing to die a death so inglorious; for the Christian warfare, erroneous as the general notion is concerning it, appears to me both noble and dignified. Thus thinking, I have fled from despondency to resources; and whilst I seize with eager gratitude the proffered hand of friendship,

I search the Scriptures, and endeavour to bow my soul before Him, who is not only described therein as “walking in darkness,” but as the succour of the afflicted. I trust these endeavours have not been entirely fruitless, as I find myself enabled to lift up my head in hope that all may still work together for my good, to which I am further encouraged by the apprehension that some important truths have been in the course of the present dispensation, more deeply than ever impressed upon my mind.

No. 20. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1811, 4 mo. 17.—It appears to me a good sign when we can relish scenes of affliction, and when we find the attention of our minds turning from the dazzling objects, and slippery ways of gaiety and greatness, and gently inclining—(for He whose tender mercies are over all his works does not break that which is willing to bend),—I therefore say gently inclining, as I have somewhere seen it agreeably expressed,

“To bend to sorrow’s path, for that alone
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.”

This, though a true, appears a strange doctrine, not only to the votaries of pleasure, but to those also who are at ease in their possessions, and have nothing to vex them. It once would have appeared strange to me; and though the avidity with which, in my most ignorant and unbelieving days, I pursued through a variety of its fleeting forms, transitory and unsubstantial enjoyments; though this blind eagerness received an early and a severe check, yet I have even in the cool of the day painfully to

acknowledge my journeying from the land of bondage to have been by tardy and devious steps, and my progress towards a better country to have been, to be, attended with many, I fear voluntary interruptions; and after all that I have seen, heard, and felt, I find it to be still a trial, and at times no small one, to keep things below in their proper places, to use this world as not abusing it, and amidst divers other instances wherein danger lies, as it were in ambush, not to love the dear relations and friends which yet remain to me, out of the divine will, or with a selfish and unsanctified affection.

No. 21. To JOSEPH GURNEY BEVAN.

1811, 12 *mo.* 26.—I was desirous of convincing thee that a retrospect of my life always affords matter enough for real humiliation, without the necessity of affecting an appearance of it; and though nothing is more true, yet I stand self-condemned for adding something like an appeal to Omniscience for its verity,* which I believe is a practice so seldom, if ever necessary, that in judgment it has my disapprobation, and I seldom observe it in others without concern, believing that the sacred name, under any of the various forms by which it is expressed, ought never to be taken or used in vain; that truth is never so lovely as when unadorned, or seldom more convincing than when resting solely upon its own evidence, and that members of our Society never act more, or so consistently, as when they speak its language with the simplicity of little children, whose beautiful example in this and some other particulars I often admire as worthy of imitation.

* Alluding to a former letter.

The longer I view thine and thy dear wife's present trials, the more I consider them as partaking of the nature of that food which seems not so much adapted to rearing and nursing the Christian character as maturing it; and this character is perhaps seldom fully perfected without some portion of strong, and it may be unpalatable meat, such as an infant could neither relish nor digest, but which is yet found to yield nutriment to minds prepared for its reception. Such I hope and trust are yours, and that you will, through condescending and continued mercy, not only be kept in safety through the remaining portion of your time on earth, but that your disembodied spirits will, in the appointed season, ascend triumphantly to the happy realms of light and love. Yes, my dear friends, the remembrance of you is attended with feelings for which, on my account also, I am thankful, having learned to prize as an especial favour that tenderness of spirit which sometimes accompanies the contemplation of suffering humanity; and which, without wholly removing, relieves in a comfortable, and I have thought a profitable manner, the pain occasioned thereby, mixing a portion of sweetness in the cup of sorrow, humbling, but not breaking or even wounding, the heart; and by this wonderful process begetting renewed aspirations for our own preservation, and for that also of every son and daughter of affliction.

No. 22. To ———.

1812, 2 mo. 5.—If my own heart does not very much deceive me, I am solicitous that nothing may ever escape me which may the most remotely tend to make those sad whom the Lord hath not made sad; and I am by

no means aware of its being my business to make you sorrowful. On considering your relative position, both spiritual and natural, to the dear and interesting young people around you, it appears to me important, and therefore I am desirous to hold out encouragement, not dismay. And this is the encouragement which I wish to impart; that as in the unfoldings of light and love, you may discover necessity and receive strength, you may, thus qualified, endeavour to draw those amiable characters more closely within the garden enclosed; or, in other words, within the warm and maternal bosom of religious fellowship and communion, as enjoyed in the sacred pale of the church of Christ. And O that no depressing apprehension of weakness, unfitness, or any other discouraging cause may prevent you from thus attempting in simplicity and sincerity to do whatever your hands may find to do in the corner of the Lord's vineyard, where, by his providence, your lot has been appointed! Here let me say, that if I fear more for you in one respect than another, it is lest a retrospective view of the painful circumstances to which you have been witnesses should operate too powerfully upon your minds.

Such, I believe, is the unutterable love and mercy of our Heavenly Father, that if we cry to Him from this valley of humiliation and abasement, He will not turn a deaf ear to our lowly petition, nor cast us utterly off; but, through the merits and sufferings of his dear Son, our only Saviour, will forgive us the past, and, if we are really willing to enter, will admit us even at the ninth or eleventh hour, as labourers into his vineyard. So that though a restoration to divine favour and regard is certainly the most important concern of human life, it appears to me, happily for poor bewildered mortals, to be a simple one—to cast

our repentant souls at the footstool of infinite but unmerited mercy ; to implore the knowledge of our present duty, taking all circumstances as they are ; and when, as thus sought for I believe it would be, the divine mind is unfolded to us, to be especially careful that faithfulness keep pace with knowledge. This seems to me to be the direct and only way to peace here, and the only sure foundation for a well-grounded hope of happiness hereafter. Accordingly, I wish to recommend it with equal solicitude to my dear friends as to my own soul.

No. 23. TO JOSEPH AND CATHERINE FOSTER.*

1812, 3 *mo.* 18.—I have for some years past had at times to struggle with a painful complaint. This disorder seems at length to have settled in dullness of hearing, accompanied with and perhaps partly occasioned by a confused and disturbing noise in the upper part of the head, which without much pain cuts me off in a very considerable degree both from the pleasures and the benefits of social life.

Yet under all, how many reasons do I find for thankfulness to that Being whose tender mercies are over *all*, and whose divine superintendence extends to the numbering of our hairs, and to the caring for sparrows ! And for nothing am I aware of being more thankful than for this thankfulness, a disposition not at my own command. So that I am enabled to receive this additional trial,—a very gentle one indeed when compared with some I have had to pass through, but of none would I complain,—not only with a small degree of patience, but of hope—a hope that as it is entirely out of my own control, it may not only be found convenient for me, but a portion of my present daily bread.

* Of Oustwick, in Yorkshire.

No. 24. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1812, 5 *mo.* 8.—I much regret there ever having existed such an idolatrous monster as the mythology of the ancients, and decidedly disapprove anything in the conversation or writings of professing Christians that may any way tend to perpetuate its remembrance. Such a practice appears to me to expose those who are in it, as every other inconsistency must do, to the pity and the blame of the believer on one hand, and to the arrows of the sceptic on the other.

Thou seemest apprehensive of not having treated my “plaint” with sufficient respect. Banish these fears, I entreat thee : kindness is perhaps as much as I can bear ; and anything further might only keep me whining—a practice, of which, often as I fall into it, I am sometimes ashamed. I was made so rather oddly the other day by picking up a book of Rachel’s, where it was recorded of Prince Le Boo, that in his last illness he only complained to his physicians for relief, not to his friends for pity. The recollection of my letters to thee, the last especially, immediately occurred to me, attended with reflections which have in part operated as a secondary cause for not resuming my pen. For such is the nature of human pride, at least in one heart, that though it has received many a deadly wound, it still is found to live, and like the repeatedly lacerated meadow, shoots up again and again, whenever the weather is favourable. So that he of whom I speak, though often brought to confess his own nothingness, feels also at other times a freshly budding desire to be something—something more like a man, according to the notions of that specious but erring school, whose maxims

he once so much admired. How far this folly might carry me may be difficult to say, did not the Physician of value, who has graciously offered himself in the most dangerous paroxysms of my feverish life, renewedly interpose to cure me of this manly conceit—a conceit unworthy of the babe in Christ. My cure, however, in such hands is easily effected: it is but commanding “the wind” to blow briskly; then who so ready to cry, “Lord, save, or I perish;” who so willing to lean upon a brother, even whilst the petition secretly ascends from my agitated breast?

As I never was sensible of such a degree of tenderness for ministers in our Society as since, for the sake of peace, I have ventured to uncover my head in meetings, so my sympathy for the widowed of either sex, and their fatherless or motherless children, has much increased since being made an experimental witness of their situation: for these I ever hope to heave a sigh, however personally unknown to me. Consequently, I did not read unmoved thy affecting account of the recent death of one of the heads of the Kerrick family. To the survivors, should opportunity offer and thou think it would be acceptable, please to present the expression of a stranger’s fellow-feeling and friendly regard. May Israel’s Immanuel be found to be their Husband and Father. This I cannot doubt will be their happy experience as they are concerned to seek to Him for such protection.

I suppose thou wilt, after making such kind inquiry, expect me to say something of my health, which I think upon the whole is rather better, though I still continue very dull of hearing. At our Quarterly Meeting, which I managed to attend, I could scarcely hear anything, but was encouraged in believing that nothing suffered from my

being set aside. This, with observing as I left Lincoln how many people were thronging to the market, led me to consider the little importance I was of to the world, either temporally or spiritually. This was a lesson which to this hour I think it might be worth while going to Lincoln to receive, as it placed *first person singular* upon a low and quiet seat, which at times he has much enjoyed since, and hopes often to enjoy it hereafter.

No. 25. TO ELIZABETH STORR.

1812, 8 mo. 30.—The kind attentions and opinions of my friends sometimes humble me; for though I think I behold in the practice of Christianity a beautiful and inestimable object to aim at, and am at times concerned to recommend the glorious attainment of it to others, yet in pressing after it my own conflicts are such, that I can pretty often feelingly apply to myself this line of one of our admired poets—

“For me, scarce hoping to obtain that rest.”

Is it not strange, that after all I have in mercy suffered, there should yet be in me the least inclination to deviate from the paths of holiness and peace, or to linger in the way of manifested duty? In spite of self-love this is surprising, and must surely rank among the most incontestable proofs of a fallen nature, and of the consequent need I have of a compassionate and powerful Redeemer. These considerations are humbling to the natural mind; but let us not faint, though I am ready to think that not only myself, but many others cannot dwell much too low to be just above despair. This might appear almost to some a

frightful sentiment, but it will not, I believe, much alarm thee ; for it may probably form a part of thy experience, that those who know the most of their Creator and themselves, are by this knowledge baptized into deep humiliation : yea, such at seasons is their abasement under a view of the Divine mercy and forbearance on one hand, and their own omissions and commissions on the other, that with the poor publican they are not only ready to smite upon the breast, but are even prepared to go a little way with the scribe also in concluding themselves not as other men are.

Here their paths divide : it was the effect of his self-righteousness to *think* himself better than others, but it is that of the Christian's self-knowledge to *feel* himself worse than those with whom he was acquainted, so that taking all things into the account, he charges himself, as the great Apostle did, with being the chief of sinners. But when brought to such a sight and sense as this, may the repenting and returning prodigal never forget that he has a Saviour, a Mediator, an Advocate with the Father ; and may he never forget tremblingly to rejoice in Him. For if there be a class of mankind who are more than others the objects of redeeming love and mercy, it might seem to be these sinners, the unworthiest and vilest of the human race. So that to my own often depressed mind I would say, " As thou hast received mercy, and hast tasted that the Lord is gracious, see that thou faint not, nor grow weary in well-doing."

My hearing is restored, and with my general health has, since my returning from the yearly meeting, been pretty good. My friend C. F. has charitably supposed me to be established upon a foundation which the privation

of these might not materially affect. I hope this may in some degree be the case. My prospects are indeed much changed, so that when I can hope myself within the pale of mercy, death appears rather as a friend than an enemy. I feel with poor Job, that "I would not live always;" that my sins and follies, with their needful corrections, have so embittered the present state of being, as to make it, upon the whole, a wearisome though an important pilgrimage. I am thankful, however, under all my prospects, past, present, and future, for a desire which attends me that patience may have its perfect work, and that I may wait in humble resignation the appointed time till my change come; and not only so, but endeavour to be content and thankful for the many blessings, both spiritual and temporal, which are still graciously vouchsafed to me, amongst which I remember "friendship's cordial balm."

No. 26. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1813, 1 *mo.* 7.—I am desirous of keeping in myself an eye of faith and hope (I speak with reverence,) steadily fixed upon that God from whose bosom Jesus descended to this lower world, and upon that heaven to which He ascended when He left it, and where, as our Advocate, He now sits enthroned in glory at the right hand of his Father, making intercession for us. So that whilst I unequivocally allow that no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him; that this revelation of the Son is in and by the Spirit; and that the manifestations of this Spirit are in the heart; yet I am also cheered and consoled by the intellectual prospect or hope which I have just been faintly attempting to describe,

though I find it difficult to express by words an idea so full of beatitude.

No. 27. To ELIZABETH STORR.

1813, 1 *mo.* 18.—The loneliness of my situation has been principally occasioned by the breaking up of our small seminary last spring, and the consequent separation of our dear children. It has sometimes happened that I have been left to discover as well as I could, the advantages and disadvantages, not merely of retirement, but of solitude. If I were to risk one thought on the subject, it perhaps might be, that just enough agreeable company to change the latter into the former, may be one of those cases in which innocent enjoyment and real advantage are combined. It is, however, best of all to endeavour after contentment, to follow circumstances, and by no means to repine, though tremblingly alive to the succession of changes, and many of them afflicting ones, of which those who live even to our age are not unfrequently made the sorrowing spectators. Long accustomed, however, to these scenes, reconciled also in good measure to ourselves, through the adorable mercies of—may we not hope?—a reconciled Father, with whom we have a constant and powerful Advocate, even the same Jesus who died for us, and now liveth to make intercession for us; and that nothing may be wanting on the part of heaven, liveth also in us, to comfort the mourners; and whilst He cheers their solitude, guides them on their way. (In this three-fold relation of Sacrifice, Advocate, and Leader, can we enough admire the fulness, the ample sufficiency of the Redeemer's character?—of which this simple, but, I think, just view, seems as much as any other, not only to give us

an exalted idea, but to excite also a profound and reasonable adoration.)

I was therefore about to say, that with such an experience of this world as rolling years have afforded us, and with that view of a better state for which we have such a hope set before us, shall we complain too much when that which is mortal dies, or when that which we know to be transient passeth away? But here let me pause and recollect, that if I am preaching, it is to myself, and that I am addressing one who is much more likely to possess her soul in patience, not only under outward trial, but in that secret poverty of spirit which she has described, and which, notwithstanding her fears, I would encourage her to believe is of the right kind.

No. 28. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1813, 1 *mo.* 21.—I seem but indifferently qualified for entering into the important subjects of thy letter. So far as I can judge, thy lines are in no way derogatory to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for ever. Just before the receipt of thine, in writing to a friend, my subject led me to speak of the amplitude and sufficiency of the redeeming plan, as exemplified in the three prominent relations of our Saviour's character. I mean, as a *sacrifice* for sin, to all who avail themselves thereof by faith and repentance, manifested by correspondent fruits; as an *advocate* with the Father, for the imperfection and weakness wherewith even the sincere but trembling disciple endeavours to follow his steps; and, finally, as an *inward leader* in the way of holiness and peace. This is the one only Saviour in whom I trust, neither expecting nor desiring another; and I

think this simple but important view of Him does not clash with thine, though I am aware it does not go to the extent of the question as it respects the unity of the divine nature, in which I unequivocally believe. As to its essence or mode, I am content to be ignorant, seeing it is one of those secrets which Infinite Wisdom has seen meet to hide from mortal ken: and does it not seem a greater proof of folly than of wisdom, to be continually straining our eyes in attempts to see that which we are told is invisible?—and such are the modes of spiritual existences, with their connexions and operations. Did not Jesus mean to guard us against this vain curiosity when he compared the influence of his Spirit to the wind, which, though it might be heard and felt, could not be seen?

* * In respect to the mind, with thankfulness I may acknowledge myself pretty comfortable, not feeling much, if any, “condemnation;” and though, perhaps, a sigh or a tear, which in the day I endeavour to conceal, may escape me in the silent watches of the night, yet even these have lately been of a kind which I can cordially welcome. I have been further encouraged by the circumstance of clearer vision, on some points important to myself, having of late been graciously afforded me, enabling me, I trust, to make a little advance out of self, and into *Him*—(which, perhaps, is a consequence)—in whom only are sufficiency and peace.

No. 29. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1813, 3 mo. 6.—Allow me to rejoice with thee in the hope, that our inquiries into the truths and doctrines of the Christian faith have resulted in an increased confirmation of their undeniable evidence, and an increased degree of

establishment in these simple doctrines, these sublime but effulgent truths. Yes, whether we turn the sceptical or the orthodox page, with a mind unprejudiced, and desirous of coming at a knowledge of the truth, I think conviction in favour of Christianity must invariably follow. Though at the same time I am free to acknowledge, that I have scarcely been less edified by anything of a serious nature, than by the casuistical disquisitions of Christian rabbies.

These recorded imaginations may be compared to summer insects, which annoy and hinder rather than benefit the traveller; and accordingly we find it necessary to defend ourselves against, not encourage them. And as we should doubt the sanity of that man who recorded every passing idea, so if these doctors could see, as I fancy may be seen, how much they veil instead of elucidate, or, as some one has better expressed it, entwine rather than enshrine the object of their speculations, though in itself a glorious one,—could they see this, they would be more sparing both of comment and controversy, and in this profitable pause might be instructed to employ their learning and talents (for it is granted they possess both) more to the peace of their own minds and the benefit of the world.

No. 30. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1813, 5 mo. 7.—Shall I tell thee that I have a little vocabulary of words and phrases, which I believe, as to the sense in which they are commonly used, want a more careful revision and correction than they generally appear to obtain? *Fate*, *fortune*, with its various combinations, *accident*, or *chance*, *infinite*, and some others, seem to be often so misapplied and perverted, as in the true spirit of

heathenism and infidelity, to give an imaginary importance to shadows, and this too by the senseless and affecting exclusion of a Providence, not only from his general superintendence, but from those particular cases wherein He might rationally be recognised, and ought devoutly to be acknowledged.

There is also a practice in the higher circles of social intercourse, with which I have a decided controversy. I mean that hyperbolical form of speech, which probably originated among the rich and the learned, and from them descended into the ranks of humbler life, so that now, instead of being

“Pleased with a feather, tickled with a straw,”

we hear of people being transported to ecstasy from no higher causes; and should a shower prevent a morning's walk, a slight pain or unwelcome tidings abridge any earthly enjoyment, they cannot stop at disappointment or uneasiness—low and insipid expressions;—their nobler spirits must take a bolder leap; and were we to take them literally, we might suppose them plunged into the slough of despond, or thrown headlong from the rock of irrecoverable ruin.

I suppose thou must meet with many such instances as these; and shouldst thou ask how I come to be so knowing in the manners of the great, the answer must be, that as the high and the low seldom come near enough to touch, the man of middle station standing between them reaches a hand to each, and keeping his eyes and ears open, conveys messages, or renders them any other service in his power; for whatever some of them may think, none of these classes can subsist independently of each other.

No. 31. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1813, 8 *mo.* 23.—I have been generally favoured with health since we saw each other, which has perhaps enabled me the better to bear up under other difficulties that have for many weeks been my close attendants. These have proceeded from various causes, though none of them, I presume, uncommon to the poor probationer, man, during this his scene of trial. There are, however, two leading circumstances, which seem to include nearly all the rest, and which, from their analogy to those great obstacles of a seaman's hope that keep him most aloof from his desired haven, I shall designate by the terms *storm* and *stagnation*.

By these are the faith and patience of the Christian mariner frequently proved; and by these, if he mistake not, has the mind of thy poor solitary brother been much, of late, alternately exercised. But the former having through mercy somewhat subsided, and the latter, as I humbly trust, been renewedly breathed upon by that creative Spirit, which in the beginning is said to have moved upon the face of the waters, I am hereby enabled, in a degree of the tenderness and contrition which conflict is sometimes found to produce, to hope that surely some good, either to myself or others, may one day arise out of so much suffering;—though this is a hope that, after all I have known of Divine goodness and mercy, I find, from the frailty and unworthiness of the creature, it is very difficult at seasons to maintain, or even to lay hold of.

On looking back, marvellous indeed do appear the mysterious overturnings of the Lord's hand, in dealing with his children for their instruction and profit—all, no doubt,

necessary. Surely neither the work of the soul's redemption, nor the preparation for service, is of man, or by man, neither come they with outward observation. May I, therefore, and may all the called of the Most High, be more and more willing to enter into the state of fools and little children, that so we may in due time become filled with the wisdom and righteousness of Him who ever was and remains to be "all in all," to his truly dependent ones.

No. 32. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1813, 9 *mo.* 18.—Thou seemest not to know, and almost to inquire, whether I am naturally more prone to mourn or to rejoice; to which I am free to give this unequivocal answer, that there was a time in my life when, imitating certainly not the wisest conduct of him who was called the wisest king, I withheld not my heart from (scarcely) any joy within its reach; but the time is now arrived when, for several of my latter years, I am not conscious of having entirely withdrawn the same heart from any sorrow with which a just and wise Providence has seen meet to visit it. Though here I must acknowledge, that my endeavours after an entire acquiescence in the Divine will have been attended with so much qualm and shrinking, as to make this important business, on retrospect, appear to myself to have been so far poorly performed, and to be yet very incomplete; but I trust a disposition to press forward still remains. The following incident, though of an inferior cast, may somewhat illustrate my meaning, and show thee in a few words the way wherein I am secretly striving to walk.

I have happened this season to grow some wheat of a kind with which I had not before been acquainted. One of its properties seems to be, to break off just under the ear, and almost before it is ripe. As I prefer ripe corn, I had suffered one of these fields to become fully so, when by some turbulent weather about two weeks since, it was computed I lost nearly one-half. In endeavouring to reconcile my mind to this circumstance, which probably thy religion or philosophy, or both, may say ought not to have disquieted it,—but which, combining as it did the ideas of mismanagement, waste, and disappointed gain, could not fail to operate sensibly on a temperament like mine,—I was quickly made sensible that it would not do to make too much of it, even in soliloquy, and that something must be attempted to silence these inward repinings. In this labour, more severe than reaping, I thought myself helped by remembering the seaman's lot, whose life and whose property so often perish in the wave ; and I was still further assisted by recollecting the manner in which

The son of patience heard the wreck
Of all his fortunes, camels, oxen, flocks,
Sons, daughters—*all* in one sad hour o'erwhelmed.

Thus renewedly fortified, though I had not the presumption to say, “Blow, ye winds,” yet I was enabled to view the storm, which was of long continuance, sporting as it were with my agricultural credit and profit, in a disposition very different, I trust, from stoical apathy. Were I to describe this disposition in one word, I perhaps might call it prostration, before a Power who maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind ; whom also I think we are told the winds and the waves obey.

This humble attitude of soul I can recommend, having found, on occasions of far different importance to that now described, the folly of resisting, and the safety of bending before the tempest, which may thus blow over us, not unperceived, but with less danger and damage.

No. 33. To ELIZABETH STORR.

1813, 10 *mo.* 23.—Among those who have been brought near to me, I may very safely name the family at Oustwick. May they be preserved from giving place to dismay, as though they were out of the pale of religious fellowship, or excluded from the universal privilege of heavenly regard. Should any be thus tried, let them remember poor Hagar and her infant son, who, in a situation the most forlorn and abandoned, were still discovered by that penetrating eye which goeth to and fro in the earth, beholding the evil and the good: and they were not only beheld, but compassionated. “The Lord heard the voice of the lad,” where he was, and by his angel comforted the disconsolate mother, giving her also information respecting the present care and future character of her son. Now, as the gracious Being who thus condescended remains unchangeable in his love to man, so I believe nothing can prevent his eye from seeing the state of poor and needy souls, nor will anything prevent Him from being attentive to their cry; and as they are concerned to open their hearts to Him, and cast their whole care upon Him, though He may see meet to try them for a season, yet, in his own time, which is the best time, He, the God of the whole earth, will as surely deliver them as ever He delivered Israel formerly from Egyptian bondage; though,

as in that case, so in the case of individuals who feel themselves solitary and secluded, it may happen that difficulties present themselves which threaten great opposition, and which it may require the interposition of Divine power to remove. Yet let us but patiently wait, and quietly hope ; and we may sometimes have to observe that the Lord will work for us, even whilst we hold our peace, so that ultimately both the real and imaginary objects of our fears shall entirely disappear, like first preventing, and then pursuing Pharaoh and his people, and covering them by the waves ;—and as was said of them, we shall see them no more for ever.

No. 34. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1813, 11 *mo.* 19.—How wonderful, to the mind which is but moderately attentive to them, are the vicissitudes to which it is liable ! I do not want to attribute everything difficult to be understood to a supernatural cause ; and I know many reasons are assignable for mental change ; but in this day of greater scepticism than superstition, perhaps it will not hurt us to remember that there is a Power which opens and shuts the heart of man at pleasure, and, in scriptural language, turns it as the watercourse in a field. And though we may not always be able to distinguish this operation from other causes, yet sometimes I think we may. And I love sometimes to indulge also, on the most extended scale, in a contemplation of the divine attribute of Omnipotence, in the exercise of those unlimited and undefinable powers whereby it touches the most powerful and most minute springs of its own machinery, and with equal ease produces effects correspond-

ing with the supreme will, whether in a heart, a universe, or a system of worlds.

No. 35. To JOSEPH FOSTER.

1814, 1 mo. 27.—As one who is desirous of possessing some claim to *Christian* character, I am more and more confirmed in my objections to war, and, as a man, I think I may say my soul is sick with the reports almost every day produced upon this affecting subject. For though I believe that, in our present state of being, we see but a part of an infinitely vast and incomprehensible plan, and that, therefore, the question, Whence came evil, and why is it permitted so to ravage and deface the works of a Being possessed of every glorious and every amiable attribute?—I say, though questions of this sort may at times almost involuntarily arise, and the best reply we can make to them may be to lay a hand upon our mouths, thereby acknowledging that they are too wonderful for us—yet, even in this case, I find no difficulty in believing that had sin never entered the world, and death by sin, war, with its unnumbered train of concomitant evils, had been unknown on earth; and the admission of sin and death were, alas! by man's consent.

But whilst I admit, with the apostle, that we see but in part, and am willing to suppose that what I have premised on this subject, or indeed all that I can say on it, may be no more than a glance through that dark medium which veils more perfect knowledge from us; yet on a simple recurrence to feeling,—and from the criterion of feeling let us never, my dear friend, suffer ourselves to be diverted by the vain and impious attempt of

sophistry,—I say, then, upon an appeal to my heart, I find there a testimony against the slaughter of man by his fellow, immutably and indelibly recorded, as an act equally repugnant to religion and reason. It opposes the first, by exhibiting a practical contrast to that divine precept in which justice and mercy are so happily blended, of doing to others as we would they should do to us ; whilst to the latter it is inimical, as being an absurd outrage upon creation, and an insult to a Creator whose tender mercies are over all his works.

And were it not that this gracious Author of our existence, who wills not the death of a sinner, that this uncontrollable Power, who bridles the jaws of destruction, has mercifully set limits, in every age, to the overwhelming torrent of war, there appears nothing improbable in the supposition, that long before this the whole human race might have fallen a sacrifice to that malevolent spirit, who, taking advantage of our corrupt and degraded nature, has never failed to instigate the ambitious and the cruel to deeds of death and darkness. In support of this sentiment, to show also the ascendancy which evil may obtain over the human mind, and how far it may become assimilated to the nature of him who was a murderer from the beginning, it may be sufficient to instance one of the numerous records of history to our purpose, that of a being in the shape of a man, who wished that his fellow-creatures had but one neck ; and why ?—not that he might strengthen, but separate it.

Thou mayst be surprised at my dwelling with so much earnestness on this distressing subject, especially when I add that neither conviction nor conversion is my immediate object : these important purposes having, I doubt

not, as relating to the present question, been long since effected in thy sensible and feeling mind. But, as thou hast pleasantly remarked in one of thy letters, that an agreement of ideas formed part of the basis of our early friendship, so in this more advanced stage of it, perhaps bringing our thoughts together, even where they correspond, may produce, and I hope not unprofitably, a degree of that animating influence which the countenance of a man is said to have upon his friend. At any rate, I seem as if I could rejoice, should this revival of brotherly intercourse prove a means of sharpening in each of us those weapons which are not carnal but spiritual, and which, if we do possess them, as I trust is the case, let us neither be afraid nor ashamed of exercising, under the direction of Him from whom we have received them, the Prince of Peace, who came on earth not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

No. 36. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1814, 5 mo. 6.—Whatever may be my experience, I still believe the only true and safe rest to consist in an unlimited surrender and submission to the Divine will. And, oh! when my poor heart is now and then softened into this disposition, how precious is the experience! Yes, my dear friend, though under a sense of the greatest unworthiness, I may do myself the justice to say that the experience just alluded to is indeed prized by me above all price; so that neither gold nor gems, spices nor perfumes, nor, could it be obtained, even all the superadded favour of all the princes in the universe, bear, in my present estimate of things, any comparison with that situation of mind

wherein the denial of our ownwill, and the doing that of the Creator, is felt to be not more a duty than a delight. But do not imagine from this luxuriance of expression that I am constantly, or even frequently, a possessor of the inestimable enjoyment described. No, I neither deserve, nor is it possible that I could bear such a fruition long together, and therefore it may be that the intervals wherein it is vouchsafed seem

“ Like angels’ visits, few and far between ;”

yet let the grateful tribute of thanksgiving and praise ascend before the throne of mercy, that such seasons are ever known by the inhabitants of this lower world, and that even in its remotest solitudes ; and thou wouldst find it difficult, my friend, to meet with one more secluded, both as to body and mind, than Gedney often is to me :—but peace, my heart ! the hand is blest that gives and takes away.

No. 37. To ELIZABETH STORR.

1814, 7 mo. 5.—The warfare of a good soldier in the Christian cause, under the sacred banners of the Prince of Peace, is directly opposed, in my judgment, to that of the princes and potentates of this world, who, when the most successful, allow but a small pittance of earthly emolument or honour to those who have resigned *all* in their cause : whereas He who is called the Captain of the Christian’s salvation has promised eternal rewards to all those who forego temporal interest or pleasure for his sake, and an immortal crown of life to such as in his church militant continue faithful unto death. And yet how few are willing to suffer with and for Him, when compared with the

multitudes who, at the signal of an earthly commander, may be led to the destruction of the body, and to a still more awful transition of the soul! This is a circumstance which often surprises me; and I can only find its probable cause in the perverseness and folly of the natural man, notwithstanding his self-sufficiency and boasted wisdom.

No. 38. TO JANE BIRKBECK.

1814, 7 *mo.* 25.—Allow me the situation (and I ask no higher) of an elder brother, who, weak as he is, would not willingly or wickedly depart from the law of his God; and that he may not so depart, is desirous of the prayers of his friends, even of such of them as may be much his juniors; and therefore hopes, when thou art favoured with access to the footstool of mercy, to be remembered there by thee.

I affectionately bid thee farewell in Christ Jesus, our advocate with the Father, even his Father and our Father, who, though He dwells on high and inhabiteth eternity, condescends to look down from his holy habitation, and from the throne of his glory, upon the humble and contrite heart, even upon that—or shall I say, *this* unworthy heart?—which, after having experienced largely of his mercies, has yet often to bewail with poignant compunction its frailty, its inconsistency, and manifold imperfections.

No. 39. TO JOSEPH GURNEY.

1814, 9 *mo.* 5.—Wert thou really to ask me how time has passed with me since we saw each other, I might per-

haps be tempted, on the first glance backward, to say, I can scarcely tell; but to sketch a little, and just as an outline,—some outward stir and some inward vicissitude, wherein, though I might speak with David of the “multitude of my thoughts within me,” I could but rarely adopt the more consoling part of his sentence, “thy comforts delight my soul.” I mean not, however, as I may have told thee before—it is never my intention, whatever language may escape me, to complain, at least not to murmur. Justice, gratitude, patience, resignation, these sublime and amiable virtues all conspire to forbid it. Nothing has yet befallen me but what may happen to all—nothing can befall me which I have not deserved. And how short is anything which I have suffered, though guilty, compared with the afflictions of Him who came into the world to “bear our transgressions,” and “by whose stripes we are healed”! All murmuring is therefore excluded, and may it never more escape my pen or my lips; but in the room thereof may I be allowed, though from the depths of creaturely abasement, to make my boast of that goodness and mercy which are, I believe, generally the most signally displayed in seasons of our greatest extremity. And were I at all inclined to boast now, it might perhaps be in having witnessed, during the time of change and poverty alluded to, the fulfilment of an ancient declaration, that “the Lord giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength;” blessed and praised be his holy name.

I have lately been strolling on the confines of Norfolk which lie nearest me—say Downham, Lynn, Runceton, Narborough, and Swaffham, and to some of these places

twice within a few months. When on my last excursion, very lately, I heard so many pretty things said of Cromer and of the better sort of folks who were assembled there, that, admiring as I do the hollow murmur of the ocean's tide, and still an enthusiast in friendship, I really felt attracted; but these attractions are now generally repelled, by the solemn consideration that I have already lived too long and too much to myself; that I ought no more, from a motive of mere gratification, to go whither I would. I therefore, on this occasion, gave the nay to an imagination yet, alas! too prone to wander, and quietly returned to my family and farm, where it seems to be my duty to fix as much as I can.

No. 40. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1815, 1 *mo.* 9.—To begin with a matter on which our views appear particularly, I had like to have said remarkably, correspondent, I may tell thee that, though more than two months have elapsed, I have not forgotten how, a few days before the receipt of thine, my mind had been exercised on account of that mixture, “not in dissipation, but in zeal,” to which thou hast alluded, as a thing which makes thee go “more heavily on thy way.” This very mixture, even where the objects of it are in themselves not only commendable but good, and which in the present eventful crisis prevails so much, not only in our own but in other countries, I am persuaded with thee, paradoxical as it may appear, and unable as I am to delineate upon paper all my reasons for such a persuasion, forms at once a new and a great danger, to which very many in

our Society, and these none of the worst, stand just now exposed.

Thyself having opened the door, perhaps I shall go even beyond thee when I acknowledge what may sound strange to some, that whilst I feel not only good-will but love towards sincere, upright, and zealous members of other denominations of Christians, I have not hitherto found it my place to mix much either in public or private with them, except as they fall in my way; but whilst they are congratulating themselves and each other on the general improvement of mankind by the institution of various benevolent establishments for that end—whilst, it may be, some of them derive further consolation, both in the individual part they are taking in these improvements, and also in the accession of number and respectability to their numerous and different sects;—amidst all this career of prosperity, (and far be it from me either to dispute or to envy it,) yet so it is, that my lot is such a very different one, as to occasion me, more like the sparrow or the pelican, to go mourning on my way, through a land where there seems to be no man near me, or, to use scriptural description, “wherein no man dwells.”

I think myself aware that outward solitude, especially when combined with a certain temperament, may produce a physical effect upon the mind. But I also think myself aware that there are far other, and very sufficient causes, for such in our little religious community as are in any degree skilful in lamentation, to dwell alone, keeping much, though not an entire silence; yea, at times, to lay their mouths as in the dust, if so be there may be hope either for themselves or others. A fear has of late sometimes powerfully assailed me, lest amidst the tide of intel-

lectual light, which I suppose by many is believed to have burst upon the world—may I say to thee that the admission of such a belief, instead of lessening, increases my anxiety for a people to whom I am not more by birth than by judgment attached?—lest this people, taken as a body, instead of being the illuminated leader, not only of the dark but of the most enlightened parts of the earth, should be either lagging behind, intent on other objects, or, like the foolish virgins in the parable, whose lamps were gone out.

This clue, if followed, might lead us to the alarming, and I think not entirely groundless apprehension, that though there may appear no present danger of our becoming extinct by persecution, yet that we may become much weakened, at least, in a very different way, by the applause and caresses arising out of the too familiar intercourse even with the better part of other religious societies; among whom, though doubtless acted up to by many valuable individuals, yet the [bearing of the] cross does not seem either to be so preached or so viewed as a criterion of Christian character as we have been taught; and have not some of us a better reason than education for believing it should be?

It seems now time for me to turn from this generally discouraging view of a people, dear I believe to each of us, towards one bright spot that I think is discernible in the prospect. Oh, that it may indeed prove like an era of light within our borders, and so increase that our dwellings may be in Goshen once more! I am now alluding to the conviction of their own principles, and practical conversion to their own profession, of here one and there another, on the whole not very few, that have of later time

appeared among us. With these new converts (for such I consider them) my mind is nearly united in sympathy and fellowship, desiring their prosperity and growth in the truth; and especially desiring, as that on which this prosperity must, I believe, much depend, that they may prove faithful cross-bearing followers of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, who when on earth said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

No. 41. To JANE BIRKBECK.

1815, 1 *mo.* 16.—We are, at least I am, often under such a degree of mental incapacity, as not only disqualifies for speaking or writing to any good purpose, but even for thinking a good thought. So that humiliating as it is to human pride, and for this end perhaps it may be permitted, our own wisdom is confounded, and our understanding, of what class soever it may be, brought to nothing, until by this crucifying, I had almost said annihilating, process, *self*, that enemy of our own houses, becomes so weakened as, for a time at least, to be of no reputation: it were difficult indeed to describe how much it requires to bring some minds low, and keep them there.

I am not afraid of discouraging thee by the picture I have drawn, believing that to such a mind it will appear not very incongruous with a probationary state, and with the circumstance of beings, who are not only on one hand prone to evil, but on the other can positively do no good thing without the assistance of Him, who, from the amplest knowledge as well as from the highest authority, made such a declaration, though to a race who, both then

and now, are very unwilling to admit the mortifying truth.

And yet, I think, if we were to survey with proper attention the annals of mankind, and observe how avarice, ambition, and pleasure have, from the earliest ages to the present day, divided yet engrossed the pursuits of the multitude ;—or if we look into their religion, we may behold even in the better parts of it, both in Christianity on its broad scale, and in the small division of it which our Society holds, wonderful fluctuations and vicissitudes ;—or if we turn to what I believe is sometimes called the world in miniature, the human heart, here, instead of the inquirer being satisfied, he finds the greatest of all paradoxical phenomena ; so that in every part of this review it seems as if we might have to encounter a degree of awful mystery, which the understanding of man cannot satisfactorily develope.

Not many days since, my own labouring heart was relieved, when almost sinking under the pressure of business, still higher solitudes for a motherless family, and, may I hope ? some care for “the churches of Christ,”—objects which, when combined, perhaps have at one time or other thrown very different characters into some perplexity ; under anxiety thus produced my mind was calmed by the unexpected presentation of this seasonable memento, “the time of *trial* is the time for *trust* ;” which, though it may contain nothing new in substance, yet being brought so opportunely, and in a form of expression too which I did not remember to have seen, caused it to be gratefully accepted as a portion of my daily bread.

I embrace the present liberty for assuring thee how much interest I feel in thy spiritual welfare. My hopes of thee

are that thou mayst be a valuable pattern to several precious young plants of thy own sex under our name, who are rising up within the immediate sphere of thy acquaintance.

Youth want monitors, but above all they want practical teachers among themselves. They are too prone to think that it is time enough yet to become religious ; or that if this be necessary, yet both the maxims and manners of their seniors are too austere. But when they see here one and there another of their equals in years, and especially if these are in possession of every means of self-indulgence, with understandings and education no way inferior to their own ;—when such are beheld stepping forward somewhat like those who in the early ages of Christianity turned out of the Roman legions, boldly declaring themselves its converts, though death looked them in the face—such a sight would be likely to arrest the attention even of the thoughtless, with this consideration—surely it must be for a reality that such sacrifices are made ; it cannot be a chimera for which these trials are endured.

I believe few outward helps would be of so great advantage to young Friends of the present day as that of witnessing among their contemporaries an increase of decided characters—of those who, dying to their own wills, and with a holy courage which eclipses that of outward warfare, taking up their daily cross, avow by the language of conduct, that they are weary of the folly of inconsistency with their own profession, that they are still more weary of the anguish of a divided heart ; and that therefore, through divine help, they are resolved to quit the service of him who is an enemy to peace, and take that yoke upon them which, notwithstanding the mistakes about it, is

light and easy, when compared with the distractions and distresses of disobedience and a wounded conscience.

No. 42. TO JOSEPH AND JANE GURNEY.

1815, 2 *mo.* 21.—I feel a further encouragement to my present purpose of addressing you, by considering that few words are necessary for the expression of sympathy and condolence, sentiments and feelings which I am solicitous, with a simplicity equal to their sincerity, of imparting to you on the affecting occasion of your dear son Henry's death.

How mingled have sometimes been my sensations in the recurrence of those solemn, those trying events which thus sever our tenderest ties, congratulating on one hand the liberated spirit on its escape from vanity and care; and on the other, sorrowing with those who, still fettered by the bonds of mortality, feel their weight increased in proportion as they are bereft of companions, who, either by their strength or enlivening society, lessened the load of life. Thus are we at seasons, strange as at first sight it may appear, enabled from the same circumstance, and almost at the same instant of time, to weep with those who weep, and to rejoice with those who do rejoice. For with joy unspeakable may we not hope that our dear deceased children are now triumphing in the presence of their Creator, whilst we are left a little longer, to fulfil the measure of our day's work, which, if faithfully performed, death shall again rejoin us (at least so nature loves innocently to believe) to such of our kindred and friends as have already been admitted within the pale of

adorable mercy, and received into the embraces of unutterable love.

Genuine sorrow seeks the shade as its natural and proper home, but an officious world, which the more attentively we observe it the more we shall be convinced of its mistakes, drags its votaries from the retirement to which providential circumstances and their best feelings have directed them, into the meridian glare of folly and dissipation, as a remedy for those very things which are the best calculated, and no doubt wisely intended, so to arrest the levity and correct the disorder of our hearts, as to incline them to listen to the still small voice of wisdom, and submit to her salutary discipline.

Thus, however, I intend not to treat the better-instructed minds of my much-valued friends; but even under their present trial to address them with the language of truth and soberness, clothed too, perhaps, in somewhat sad array. Yes: I am inclined to tell them that, as is often my portion, I have been of late much the son of inward affliction; the causes whereof seem too complicated for me clearly to discover; but as I do not discern disobedience among these causes, I desire not to be too inquisitive; perhaps a sympathetic feeling with the various kinds and degrees of suffering humanity may be of the number. But as words are not just now much at my command, perhaps I cannot give you a better general idea of my situation than by simply mentioning the kind of reading which has for some time past afforded me the most satisfaction: in the Scriptures, such parts as contain promises to the penitent, the poor, the blind, and above all, to those who through many besetments, tribulations, and infirmities, have endured to the end. Of other writings, some of the valuable letters of

such of my friends whose kindness now and then inclines them to salute a poor, absent brother, have been reperused, I trust, with something more than mere gratification : the short and promiscuous annals of old and young, male and female, rich and poor, exhibited in the volumes of *Piety Promoted*, have also afforded an instructive satisfaction.

Perhaps, under a depression which I am thus attempting in a very indirect way to describe, few things could have been more likely to prevent a total extinction of hope than the discovery of this real change in my literary taste. For there has been a time when, through fulness, ignorance, and unbelief, such food as that just alluded to would have been very lightly esteemed, or possibly, for want of understanding its precious hidden qualities, loathed and despised. But, thanks be to God, who, by the various dispensations of spiritual hunger and thirst, of weariness and painfulness, both in body and mind, hath at length made those important truths which once would have been very unpalatable, if not bitter, to become sweeter than honey or the honeycomb ; yea, to become like strength to my sinews, and as marrow to my bones. Oh ! for a suitable return !

No. 43. TO SUSANNA CLARK.

1815, 9 *mo.* 5.—I trust the time may have arrived when the voice of disinterested and dispassionate sympathy may be no unwelcome sound ; nor may this language be less welcome when heard from one, who once hard of heart, yet taught at length by his own sufferings, apprehends himself thereby qualified to participate at seasons in others' woes. That such cha-

racters [alluding to the death of her husband] should be snatched from us just at the time when, from their experience, maturity of judgment, and other ample means, they seem as it were in the zenith of their usefulness, certainly appears to our finite and limited understandings not less mysterious than awful. Yet to our faith it is at times evident that He who hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, whose path is in the great waters, and whose footsteps are not known,—and to my faith it has been this day renewedly given to believe, and a desire raised to encourage thee, my valued friend, under thy present trial to believe also, that this Almighty, this incomprehensible Being doeth all things well; and that even his most inscrutable and obscure dispensations shall ultimately work together for good to those who love Him. What then have those who desire above all things to love and fear their Creator to do, but patiently to wait for the knowledge of his will, implicitly obeying it when clearly manifested to them; and not only so, but even by submissive resignation endeavouring to follow Him, when He is pleased to introduce them into a hidden, gloomy, and cheerless path? Yea, though He may bring the blind by a way that they know not, and lead them in paths that they have not known, still let them follow Him, confiding in his gracious promise, that even here He will not leave them nor forsake them. My own rebellious heart and inflexible will bear me witness, that it has been through many a conflict that my advancement so far as I have already attained, be this what it may, has been effected; yet having received mercy, and having also been hitherto helped with a little help in times of difficulty and distress, I faint not, but trust I am feebly pressing forward towards

that mark of perfect dedication and obedience from which I often seem to myself to be at an awfully discouraging distance ; yet at other seasons, animated by the renewing of faith and hope, I am concerned to invite others, and especially my fellow-professors, to accompany me in this tribulated but holy and glorious path. And whilst I feel myself as in bonds, both spiritual and temporal, I sometimes earnestly crave that these, in the Lord's time, may be so far broken as that I may become more qualified than has yet been the case to be a minister of consolation to my dear friends.

No. 44. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1815, 9 *mo.* 26.—I lament with thee over the poor sailors and their still more miserable pillagers, who seem to occupy one of the lowest situations on the scale of human depravity: still let us pity them ; I think I sometimes do sincerely.

That the men-of-war collected at Plymouth afforded a grand and striking spectacle I have no doubt ; and it is very probable that, as stupendous and rare objects, I might also have admired them, though of their symmetry or the want of it, I am but a poor judge, as they do not sail here, neither have they much attracted my observation when I might have made some. Of their employment, however, I can speak with more decision, and say that I detest it. As a system I think the gigantic wickedness of war can only be equalled by its monstrous absurdity, and that it is no less obnoxious to philosophy than to

religion. In making up my mind on this deeply-affecting, and from its magnitude, interesting subject, I have endeavoured, as perhaps is the best way in such cases, to place it in the strongest light. I never find it more clearly reflected than by a comparison with what the apostle has aptly defined to be "the fruits of the flesh" and "of the spirit." When thus tried, it appears in my view to possess, or to have in its train, all the former, and few, if any, of the latter qualities. And if this be true, however cautious we ought to be, in consideration of what and where we *all* are, of applying harsh language to individuals, yet as a practice common among men, have I said, or can anything be said too severe of that which, instead of peace and good-will, breathes destruction and misery in every possible, every aggravated form, to the human race? Yes, of warriors may it not be said, in the emphatic language of Scripture, "Their feet are swift to shed blood : destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known." And though I would not apply indiscriminately to the soldier the language of the succeeding verse, "There is no fear of God before their eyes," yet I do most unequivocally believe, that so far as a man even of amiable and virtuous dispositions (and such I grant there may be) is connected with war, so far it is a drawback upon his Christian character.

Of those stately buildings, too, which thou hast mentioned as having been admired by our late dear friend, perhaps we each of us think somewhat alike ; but like the ships just spoken of, they are connected with a trade which, though less abhorrent to our feelings, we cannot approve. Yet here again let us discriminate between persons and

things. I have no doubt that there are many valuable characters in the Established Church; and though I fear many of her ministers are, to say the least, mercenary men, yet towards others I have to my comfort thought myself qualified at times to apply this language: "When I meet a man of a pure mind, my own is at rest." After all these allowances, with the unjust and oppressive traffic of priesthood or priestcraft, take which we like best for a text, I have long been disgusted; and like Cowper have been ready at times to laugh or mourn at the rueful jest. For really when at this moment I take a dispassionate, and I think unprejudiced, view of the worst kind of priests of all ages and under every name, where such appointments are or have been made, I find less charity towards them, possessing so many advantages, than for the poor outcasts of society whom I have just told thee I pity:—numbers of whom, I apprehend, friendless, helpless, and ignorant, have been thus led, like the captive victim, to their own ruin; though others doubtless have volunteered on the dreadful path. But for the hypocritical and still more daring sinner, who, under pretence of religion and protected by law, with haughty step and supercilious brow, practices wickedness and deceit—with this character my very soul is at variance; and I have a heavy charge against it for contributing more than most other things to my youthful scepticism, as I believe it has also done in all times and places whatever it has appeared, to that of infidelity in general.

Thou wilt probably think me very cynical, but having thyself proposed the different subjects, thou must have patience if possible to hear me on one more, as, after dealing

about me so freely on others, it seems but fair to look at home, and take some notice of thy "seven women to one man," in our own little community. This circumstance is certainly cause of depression, though not I think for dismay. I recollect a time when, on viewing *our* ministry, where also a degree of the same disproportion prevails, I felt myself rather stimulated than disheartened by this part of the prospect. I really felt a glow of honest shame that those whom we sometimes call weak, subordinate, &c. should leave all that is dear to them, as many of them do, to encounter most kinds of hardship and peril, whilst the lords of creation were some at the counter, some at the desk, and it may be a few on their farms; all pursuing pleasure or gain. Need it surprise thee, if when thus excited, I should have felt something of a desire to be made worthy to accompany these female pilgrims, not only in their peregrinations but trials, which I cannot help thinking must to their sensible minds often be very great? Consistently therefore with these sentiments, when the feet of my sisters are directed this way, I sometimes proffer myself as their guide through the long stages of Lincolnshire.

Just at parting, shouldst thou wish to know how it fares with me spiritually, I may tell thee that my secret exercises have of late been sometimes attended and my heart softened, by the mingled emotions of grief and of gratitude. Of grief that naturally, as the offspring of Adam, I am what I am;—and of gratitude that the Lord is not only long-suffering and merciful, but graciously disposed, by the aid of his Spirit, to ameliorate and improve this fallen and degenerate nature. I am aware that many are

of opinion, that thus to proclaim, as perhaps they might call it, our own humility, is near of kin to pride, or done to court the praise of being or rather seeming humble. But I have thought it possible to refine too much on this point, and that some worthy characters whom I have known and loved have done so. For to me it seems allowable to say or write anything that may tend to produce real abasement in ourselves or others, or to magnify and exalt the Divine character and its attributes, which perhaps never appear more dignified and luminous than when placed in contrast with our own limited powers, and with those imperfections which from the fall, I suppose, have been derived to our bodies and our minds.

Wherefore, my valued friend, without being too casuistical, let us not be afraid, even by the communication of our own experiences, of exhorting and encouraging each other to that abhorrence of self which a sight of the Divine perfections excited in one formerly.* Let us also encourage each other to the praise of that Almighty Power which, from our youth up, has done and prevented, and is daily doing and preventing, much for us. If it were not so, where should we have long since been, or where should we yet soon be, both as to spiritual and temporal things; and for all these mercies, ancient and new, should not all within us unite and say, ALLELUIA?

No. 45. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1816, 2 mo. 26.—Ah! what is morality? and what are the talents, natural or acquired, by which it is taught? In

* Job, xlii. 6.

the view which I at present have of them they resemble the small cordage which may indeed be sufficient for us in a calm, but will be found very inadequate in the storm. While our sun is in its zenith, or wafted by gentle and ambrosial gales, like swans upon the tide, we sail securely and complacently along:—but a small force may be necessary to conduct or restrain us. But when midnight darkness prevails, when neither moon nor stars appear, when a tempest lies heavy on us, and the winds blow from all quarters—then tossed as between Scylla and Charybdis—which, like those I would figure by them, are not fabulous dangers,—at such a season as this we have need of our pilot, our cables, our anchors. Those who sail near the shore or in shallow streams may require but a slender equipment, but the circumnavigator must be well found.

Far be it from me to envy those whose privilege it may be to walk in a comparatively smooth way, with safety and acceptance in the Divine sight. If their state be that of *acceptance*, I would not interrupt its tranquillity or disturb its repose, though it know nothing of hanging its harp upon the willow, or should enjoy a perpetual capacity to sing Psalms. How far this may be the state of any, or what may be their number, it is not for me to say, but I am strongly impressed with a belief, that in all ages, of course our own not excepted, a remnant, and perhaps not a very small one, have had a widely different allotment—have had to pass as through the fire, and therein to be “refined as silver is refined, and tried as gold is tried.” Whilst under these occasionally renewed operations, they have found it hard work getting along—their faith and hope and patience all ready to fail them. Insomuch that

like certain pious, Scriptural characters, when thus closely tried, they have petitioned that, if consistent with the Divine will, their life might be taken from the earth, seeing they were no better than their fathers. And I have thought that there may be one very reconciling apology for the desire of death produced by such a pressure of exercise or of affliction, if kept within the limits of humble resignation, that if we could no more promote the sacred cause, we should no longer be in danger of dishonouring it.

I noticed what thou sayst of thy discourse with S. A. on the subject of war. I am one with thee in thinking that our judgments often arise out of the improper indulgence of our passions: remove the cause, and we prevent the suffering—let the drunkard be sober, and he shall have less headache. If our duty and our happiness are materially connected, why should not misery to a considerable extent follow the breach of it? But I am afraid of entering at any length into a discussion of war: it is a subject on which I am so apt to forget my own weakness, and to be so carried away by the powerful stimulus of the moment, that I find it too difficult for me to express myself with sufficient acquiescence and regard to the mysterious conduct of Providence, who doubtless permits such,—and such are the bulk of mankind,—as reject that government which I should call an individual theocracy, and in my view the best of all governments—these He doubtless permits to punish themselves and each other with the sword.

Considering war in the abstract, I find it equally repugnant to my understanding as a man, and to my feelings as a Christian; and this is so much the case, that were I, what I never shall be, or what, constituted as in many respects I am, it is not proper I should be, an orator and a

senator, were I seated on this eminence, a war minister might probably receive more opposition, at least more declamation from me on this subject, than has been heard in all the parliaments of all countries. For however unequal to the task, I have a notion that this dreadful practice is capable of being placed in a view more disgusting and degrading to human nature, and more disparaging to nature's God, than to my knowledge has ever yet been attempted in our chief national assemblies. I think it might be made to appear to stand in direct opposition to all the amiable and excellent dispositions which the apostle has called "the fruits of the Spirit," whilst it might be as satisfactorily proved to be the legitimate and natural offspring of those evil ones which he has denominated "the fruits of the flesh;" bitter and unwholesome fruits, engendered in the worst parts of our being, and matured by the grand adversary of mankind—by that malignant spirit who has been its betrayer and murderer from the beginning.

No. 46. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1816, 7 *mo.* 5.—As my recent turn into Norfolk was alternately interesting, impressive, and sweet, so the remembrance of it is satisfactory; and I have been made thankful that in revisiting my low situation, and in some respects lonely home, I have found it a quiet habitation. This has led me afresh to admire the divine condescension and goodness, not only in forgiving, for his own name's sake, his dear Son's sake, and our poor soul's sake, the sins of wilful disobedience, but in passing by those lesser omissions and commissions which through weakness and infirmity, were He not a more merciful than severe judge,

might, even after our conversion and whilst endeavouring in general to serve and to please Him, be justly charged upon us. Yes: I am not only willing to believe, but am fully persuaded, that amidst all the helps and the favours of the time I passed in Norfolk, and some of these were no common ones, every day of mine might have been thus marked. And yet whilst our poor frail nature is ready to tremble under such impressions as these, to feel at the same time no condemnation, what an unspeakable and unmerited favour! Of the love then wherewith we are loved by our Creator, and the manner in which our feeblest endeavours, if sincere, are accepted of Him, may it not indeed be said,—

“O the height and depth surprising!
 O the length and breadth how great!
 Generations past and rising
 Shall the bliss participate.”

For thy dear suffering daughter, and my beloved friends, her tender and affectionate parents, I have found that a consoling sense which while with them prevailed much with me, did not until about to part and since leaving them receive the addition of so acute a sympathy as might have been expected. She appeared to me to be endeavouring, and with considerable success, after an acquiescence in her lot of trial. Is not this the very essence of prayer and of praise? and have we not cause to believe that any one whom Infinite Wisdom has laid upon the couch or the pillow of declining health, though a child in other respects, may, by this resignation, be as sufficiently supported and as sweetly comforted as those who, entrusted with different powers, are by the same unerring authority sent across the rolling billows, to meet the face of opposing tumult in distant lands with a message of peace?

We have been very busy since our return. Last second-day was the finishing of our sheep-shearing, at which about noon we gave a simple treat to all poor children who come and bring a spoon with them. It consists of wheat-frumenty, with sweets, raisins, &c., to make it palatable. They eat it standing on the green near the kitchen-door, upon temporary tables of boards, and some of the little ones recline with their mothers on the grass. It is rather difficult to number them exactly ; but I believe there were not less than one hundred and fifty thus engaged at one time, besides stragglers. This custom is I believe rather ancient, and I can remember its being pretty general here : it is now nearly obsolete ; but the sight is so interesting, and a good meal, with much pleasure to the receivers, is bestowed at so moderate an expense, that I cannot give up my own share of gratification in the business.

No. 47. To JOSEPH AND JANE GURNEY.

1816, 9 *mo.* 21.—Did I not more frequently think of you than tell you so, I should expect the reproach of my own heart : by it, however, I am not at present on this ground accused. It is sometimes a matter of regret with me that my thoughts are not more frequently such as I could communicate with a greater prospect of reciprocal satisfaction, but I cannot command a good thought, much less breathe a prayer when I would. When I can do either, there are few indeed of my dear friends on whose behalf I should be more ready to prefer them at the footstool of that mercy to which we are all debtors ; and when

we are permitted to approach which, I believe we do well to remember others as well as ourselves.

But from the opportune and acceptable appearance of a letter from one of you the last evening, I do not know that I could have made any addition to this brief effusion, except I had said, how pleasant the thought was to me that our last letters, as has sometimes happened before, crossed upon the road, a circumstance that reminds one of, and even bespeaks, a willingness to shake hands.

I was also indebted to that letter for sending me to my Bible. By it I was corrected of a little misconception, which did not however materially affect my subject of seeking gold, as I did not mean an attack upon the immediate or improper search of that dazzling toy only, but upon any other of our castle-building schemes of earthly happiness, of which you know there are many. In turning over the journal of our departed friend S. G., I not only found instruction pleasingly conveyed, but satisfaction in its more substantial form. Perusing the extracts from her letters, in particular, one observation forcibly struck me, how much her hopes and fears resembled ours, confirming me in a sentiment which I think George Dilwyn has thus expressed : “ Hope and fear are essentials in religion.” I am more inclined to mention this, because if I mistake not, my friend J. G. has been sometimes more alarmed for my timidity than I have been for his courage. I fancy we should blend them ; but how difficult it is, at least for the coward, to make them nicely incorporate ! Perhaps this difficulty is never greater with me than in religious movements, or when looking towards my dear motherless children.

I was glad of — and her companion’s visit at

Gedney ; it seemed like opening a little spring of refreshment in a weary, if not a desert, land : and is not this one of the effects which, under gracious appointment, our visits are sometimes permitted to produce ? whatever might be my claim, I gladly accepted the boon.

The account of your domestic situation was interesting to me. I cannot wonder that having had dear —— at home this summer should have increased reciprocal attachment, and have made the prospect of another separation painful : it seems comfortable, however, that there is so much light upon it, as may enable you to move in hope, leaving the event to Him who not only beholds our actions, but regards their motives, and whose blessing alone can prosper anything we design or attempt. I do not express myself thus lightly, or as in words of course, but as a lesson which it has cost me something to learn, and to which I have often great need to recur.

No. 48. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1816, 10 mo. 9.—Although I have read and may have reasoned on the limited nature of human powers, I perhaps was never more practically convinced both of their imbecility and contracted scope, than by the present calamitous harvest weather. That we can neither command a ray of sunshine, nor stay the bottles of heaven, is a truth which I desire may be as profitably impressed upon many minds as I hope it is indelibly on my own. Be not surprised and say, I might have known this long before. Alas ! we are poor creatures, learn slowly, and often want even our former knowledge renewing.

No. 49. To JOSEPH AND JANE GURNEY.

1816, 12 *mo.* 21.—Being this morning enabled more than at some other times (for such things are not at my command) to pay a visit of tender sympathy to your stripped habitation, and under this feeling renewedly not only to crave but to hope that He who had graciously been with you in former trials would not leave nor forsake you either in the present or future,—these thoughts I am willing to communicate, from the sweet satisfaction it would afford me to be the medium of conveying to you, if it were but as a grain of that comfort wherewith (adored be his mercy) I myself have in seasons of deep affliction been “comforted of God.” This you know was the wish and the endeavour of an apostle formerly, for those who were in any trouble. I trust it is allowable for Christians of the present day, and so far as I may be allowed to appreciate my own feelings, it is at the present juncture, to you-wards, affectionately and sincerely mine.

Perhaps there are few things that have not their degrees : that this is the case in affliction I am convinced both by the observation of others and my own : it has its progressive stages, and perhaps each stage distinguished by a peculiar characteristic. To you I need not enumerate, and indeed my intention is nearly to confine myself to one, and one too which, from the resignation whereby it is marked, has been called by a writer of great sensibility, in one of his most pathetic compositions, “the sabbath of the mind.” Yet as the natural life cannot be supported by rest alone, but requires a renewal of food, so whilst in this probationary state it seems also to be with the mind ; and

however peaceful the sabbath alluded to may be, yet without occasional renewals of strength, a kind of vacuum and debility will probably be induced, injurious, if not destructive, to those energies of the spiritual life, which, both on account of ourselves and others, it seems to be equally our duty and our interest to endeavour to preserve: and wherein under circumstances of pressure, somewhat like the poor animal in a receiver from which the air is exhausted, do our efficacious endeavours consist? I believe in application to the Fountain of life and power, that He will be pleased from time to time to infuse into our souls such portions of his own divine breath as may in every stage of sorrow and suffering, through which He may see meet to conduct them, preserve their health and vigour, to the promotion of his own glory, their solid comfort, and the encouragement of others in an acquiescence with every providential dispensation.

No. 50. To J. AND C. FOSTER AND E. STORR.

1816, 12 *mo.* 28.—Not only my heart but my eyes were ready to overflow on the return of such an inclination to write to you, as I am both unwilling and afraid to suppress. I express myself thus because it seems an inclination not merely resulting from that affection which I trust neither silence nor absence will ever diminish, but as including in its comprehensive embrace all the interest and solicitude which I am capable of feeling for everything appertaining to you, that a friendship natural or religious can be called upon to feel for:—a sense which, when granted me as the moving principle of an address either vocal or written to

any of my dear friends, I am very thankful for, because when I can tell them this, though I should tell them no more, it may afford them a little satisfaction, perhaps some encouragement.

Since I saw you, and since we exchanged a letter, I have heard, through different channels, of circumstances which I conclude must have nearly affected you. I trust the best support has been vouchsafed, adequate to these trials ; and that however great, you have not thought them peculiar, as though some new or strange thing had happened to you, seeing that such are the tribulations also of your brethren and sisters who are in the world. For although probation may vary in its shape or kind, yet I believe, did we know all things, we should clearly see that in degree it is much more equally dispensed than when looking only at our own lot we are apt to suppose ; but when we consider that some afflictions are obvious, others secret, and that those who are exercised by them are of very different experience and strength, we may easily conceive the incompetence of our limited faculties for judging in a case so difficult ; but that it requires *omniscience* itself to appreciate our different states, and *omnipotence* to apportion to each of them its due degree of either suffering or joy.

That some, perhaps many, though their number is impossible and unnecessary for us to ascertain, are tried as to a hair's breadth ; or in other words, to the extent of their capacity for bearing, is a thing which I, probably you also, have much reason to believe. In the course of our pilgrimage, have we not at seasons been brought into situations comparable to that outward tempest to which an apostle (the vicissitudes of whose life might not be unaptly

compared to a voyage) was in his days exposed?—a storm scarcely exceeded by any account upon record, wherein not only the lights of heaven were for many days and nights withheld, but articles of the greatest importance and value were cast overboard for the sake of lightening the ship, which was then suffered to drive before the wind, and yet, though the vessel was ultimately destroyed, not a single life was lost.

Ah! my beloved friends, how striking the resemblance between the circumstance just alluded to, and that of those who, sorely driven by the wintry blasts of adversity, find that all their former experiences and the efforts of their understanding, which on many occasions heretofore have served them well, are now no longer of any avail; and that the only way to save themselves from distraction or despair, seems to be to cease from their own exertions, and cast their most valued attainments as into the sea of conflict, committing and commending the poor frail bark of nature, with all its appendages, natural or acquired, to the winds and the waves, or rather to that God who rules them! And as this has been found to be the last resort of the distressed mariner, when tossed with a tempest, and not comforted, so it has proved his wisest course; for though it may not have brought him immediately to his desired haven of eternal rest and peace, he has perhaps ere long found anchorage-ground on which to rest awhile and recruit his nearly exhausted powers. And after having taken refreshment and repose under the sheltering wing of Him whom the winds and the ocean obey, gratefully impressed also by a sense of his marvellous deliverance, he perhaps finds himself not only more disposed, but by the loss of some things he had parted with in the storm, more disencumbered, and at

more entire liberty to prosecute the remainder of his spiritual course through life, than had ever been the case previous to those sore tribulations and exercises.

No. 51. To J. J. GURNEY.

1817, 3 *mo.* 17.—With a heart like a common one, “deceitful above all things,” and which, before its acquaintance with the Redeemer, sank into the most humiliating degradation, and would yet, as I have cause to believe, if deprived of his preventive and supporting grace, again be liable to sink, as naturally as a weight let fall tends to its centre, into a state which might not only astonish and confound, but ruin me;—under such a circumstance, what need do I daily feel, not of fine notions and fair speeches, but of a Saviour who is both able and willing to save, and that to the very uttermost! And this I believe is not peculiar to me, but is the lot of all the sons and daughters of Adam. And as nothing in the most trying parts of thy experience can probably exceed this, so can anything be more likely, than the belief that we have each tasted and handled something of it, to excite those earnest desires or prayers for each other’s preservation, which, as thou hast justly observed, are among the number of Christian privileges and consolations?

Well:—be of good cheer, for I believe the Master hath called and is calling thee; and whatever difficulties thou mayst meet with in endeavouring to obey his call, yet as thou art concerned to follow Him in simplicity, and as entire dedication is thy only aim—as thus thou perseverest, thou shalt ultimately witness that overcoming to which,

especially in the very interesting book of the apostle John's Revelations, so many precious promises are annexed. Having adverted to this part of Scripture, I may tell thee how sweet the character of the Philadelphian angel appears to me, so that though more than half-desponding I am ready to cry : O ! that I might obtain such a testimony at that awful tribunal, where every man shall be judged according to his works ! However, let us not cease to aspire after this testimony, contenting ourselves at the same time with the lowest hopes of reward ; to be just admitted into the bride-chamber before the door is shut. O ! what an unspeakable, what an unmerited mercy will this be to some poor souls !

25th.—In differences of religious sentiment, perhaps few are more disposed, encompassed as I am with human infirmities, to make allowance for them. The right of private judgment too, abused as we are for refusing it, perhaps few more freely admit ; because it seems to me to be inseparable from that free agency with which our Creator has seen meet to entrust us. But whilst I fully and unequivocally recognize this unalienable right, I am compelled to believe that it is often, very often, made subservient to the purposes of passion, prejudice, and vanity ; or languishes under an indolence and an ignorance which ought to be, and which might be, by means within the reach of most, better informed. I therefore feel solicitous, for few things more so, that in the exercise of this most valuable of all spiritual and temporal privileges, our inquiries on serious subjects may always be proportioned to the importance of the decision.

Wilt thou, to use thy own words, excuse my thus running on, making allowance too for all the imperfections

which I assure thee arise from more than one kind of weakness. For to myself I very often, and even now, seem like the ruins of a man. And yet, amidst the decay of bodily and relaxation of mental strength, hope, sweet hope in an intercessor with the Father continues at times to cheer me. O! how thankful have I been for a ray of it this very day!

No. 52. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1817, 5 mo. 25.—The sittings of the Yearly Meeting have been solemn and weighty, friends appearing generally preserved in a quiet, harmonious, and condescending disposition, which I much desire may be continued to us, as these are qualities which seem to me to be so very consistent with our profession, and I hope are becoming more and more acknowledged to be such, both in precept and practice, when we are thus assembled for the professed purpose of promoting vital Christianity, which, to epitomize, we may perhaps call “peace on earth and goodwill to men.”

The meetings for worship which I have attended seem to me to have been seasons of Divine condescension and favour, the silent part of them impressive, and some of the communications of a highly instructive and awakening, though consolatory, character. I am always glad when these happen to be so united in the testimonies of our friends, that those who are furthest off may be invited to draw near, and even the most rebellious encouraged to believe, that on repentance and amendment of life, through the merits of a glorious and holy Redeemer, their sins shall be forgiven them. This I believe thou knowest is the main stay of thy poor friend, whose hand is ready to

tremble whenever he touches the awful theme ; he feels perplexed, but not in despair.

31st.—Six days have elapsed, in which I have not been able to find an hour in which, without intruding on those devoted to occasions that left me no choice or rest, I could resume the interesting employment of thus communing with thee. The Yearly Meeting of women friends concluded with one sitting yesterday, ours with two, and each I believe with much satisfaction, which to me suffered no drawback from the meeting of ministers and elders this morning, which I thought partook of that precious evidence of Divine regard that has attended many, if not most, of the sittings, both of the general and select meetings, uniting friends together in the best bonds, and causing them, I doubt not, at seasons, to remember with affection, sympathy, and fervent desire, their absent brethren : feelings and sentiments under which I have wished, and I think not wished in vain, to pay a mental visit to my dear friends at Nice,* whose claims are, and long have been, so strong upon anything I may have to spare, whether of a religious or social nature.

* * * Resignation, as we sometimes find it infused into the mind, sweetens our bitterest cups. This brings to my recollection a season wherein time, place, and circumstance being all against me, I was in great danger of murmuring, when suddenly my thoughts were calmed by the following simple lines being formed within me, I cannot tell how :

No matter where, if Thou art there,
Supporting by thy grace ;
Thy will be done, through Christ thy Son,
In every time and place.

* His friends were then resident there for the benefit of the health of a beloved child.

No. 53. TO J. J. AND JANE GURNEY.

1817, 9 *mo.* 29.—How great is the mystery of godliness! This is an exclamation that has probably escaped the lips of thousands before our day, and may with equal probability burst the bonds of astonished silence when we are gone. Great, superlatively great, indeed, is this mystery!—and, as I have thought, in few things more remarkable than in its raising up as from the stones of the street, the dead in trespasses and sins; and making of these, even of these, children unto Abraham, who in their day and time shall be instrumental in gathering other children unto Him; and these, again, becoming in their turn like foster-parents, or delegated shepherds, under the one universal Head, to generations yet unborn, until the grand design of Omnipotence, in placing us where and what we are, shall be completed.

Can we too much admire this glance into the mystery, if, as I think, such an one it is; or admitting that such it may be, can we too much adore its Author?—a very small part of whose wondrous works, either in nature or in grace, are, as I apprehend, unveiled to us, or perhaps could be borne by us, whilst probationers here below: an idea which I think is beautifully illustrated, if not confirmed, by the following stanza of Beattie:

“ One part, one little part, we dimly scan
Through the dark medium of life’s feverish dream—
Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,
If but that little part incongruous seem;
Nor is that part, perhaps, what mortals deem:
Oft from apparent ills our blessings rise.
O, then, renounce that impious self-esteem,
That aims to trace the secret of the skies.
For thou art but of dust; be humble and be wise.”

I now wish, with an affection and solicitude which are as foreign to mere compliment as they are strangers to them, to congratulate you on an union which I think has much of mind in it as well as of outward advantages, and so much of both, as to promise the greatest share of temporal felicity. But whilst I thus most sincerely congratulate you on all the advantages of such an event, I should apprise you, that even these satisfactions and privileges should be enjoyed in reference and subordination to the Giver of every good and perfect gift—that they ought frequently to be offered in sacrifice at his footstool—and that whilst you admit no inferior competitor into your hearts, He, the Creator of the heart, must reign unrivalled there.

I would also apprise you, that without any fault of ours, the sweetest, the most innocent earthly enjoyment is liable to frequent and unexpected interruptions. In this ordeal, this prison of the soul, many things combine against our present happiness. The war of elements, the more fierce and cruel war of men's passions, prejudices, and interests, all aggravated by the malice of an unwearied and potent enemy, will one or other of them be frequently reminding the most prosperous and the most happy, that this world affords not the ultimate rest of an immortal spirit,—that earth is not its final home. Of these things, beloved pair, though you knew them before, I have thought it might not be amiss, in the zenith of your allowable enjoyment, to put you again in remembrance.

No. 54. To J. J. GURNEY.

1817, 10 mo. 30.—I have thought I could scarcely do full justice to either of us without just telling thee how

much, and how circumstantially, thou hast once more given expression to my own feelings and experience in the description of thy outset, or, at least, hitherto short course in the work of the ministry. This I find to be such a counterpart of my case, not only in its earlier stages, but I might almost say to the present time, that I am inclined to give thee thy own words, as the best comment I can devise on this important and interesting subject.

Thou sayest, “ To open my mouth at meeting is a duty which I have had deep reason to believe has been required at my hands not unfrequently. It has seemed to me impossible to do otherwise, consistently with my own peace, than to go straight forwards in it, without much looking to the judgment of others. What others think of me I know not; but I do heartily desire to live more singly in this, and in everything else, to the Lord, and not to man.”

These are thy own expressions, to which, if I added anything, it might be, that on this walk it has hitherto been my lot to go, as it were, blindfold, endeavouring with as much simplicity as I can to commit myself and my work to the Lord and my friends, in the hope, that if I materially err, either the one or the other will correct me: and I may here acknowledge having been a few times “ tenderly admonished ” by the latter, and I hope to my profit.

No. 55. To J. J. GURNEY.

1818, 2 *mo.* 27.—Though speaking much of oneself is not very desirable, yet, facts being the best supporters of opinions, I should therefore say, that as time revolves over

my own head, new and in some instances unlooked-for solicitudes attend its revolutions; and as a further illustration I might add, that just now—though my own individual trust, knowing in whom I have believed, remains unshaken—yet on looking around me, into our little religious society and the world in general, I am embarrassed and perplexed; so much so that the chief support I have is derived from such passages as these: “Without me ye can do nothing”—“Except ye be converted, and become as little children,” &c.—“If any man will be my disciple,” &c.—“If any man will be wise,” &c. The following passage, which I think is from Rutt’s Diary, seems also much to suit the present state and views of my mind: “Look at the friendship of men in the world and in the church; look at the tedious pursuits after, and the imperfections of science; the darkness and weakness of thy own mind; the uncertainty of riches; the danger and hurt annexed to eating and drinking, and to company; and the suggestions of Lucifer in thy brightest moments; and see if thou canst rest thy soul here without aspiring after a better state.”

Thus mayst thou, my dear younger brother, perceive, that although so much before thee in years, my food as well as thine consists, in part, of “unpalatable herbs,” and is, I assure thee, much more appalling than grateful to a nature such as mine; yet, being mercifully accompanied in its ministration by a good degree of submissive acceptance, to use thy own language: “I hope, and almost believe,” its tendency is to deepen; for I never remember feeling much more willing to have my understanding confounded, my purposes, both spiritual and temporal, broken,—and thus stripped of everything useful

or ornamental, to renew my endeavours to follow the internal leadings of Christ. Lead, then, and guide through the wilderness, storm, or impenetrable darkness, according to thy holy will, O Lord! I beseech Thee, is the present prevailing language of my soul.

As to prayer, such is the nature of my regard for thee, thy dear wife, and sister Priscilla, that it seems almost as natural for me to desire good for you as for myself; and since the receipt of thy letter I have considered it no small privilege to be enabled, not only thus to crave, but to clothe my desires in the language of solemn petition, that nothing might shake our faith; that nothing might weaken our attachment to religion in general, or to our friends by particular profession; and, finally, that neither heights nor depths, principalities nor powers, things present nor things to come, may ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But that, on the other hand, beings of yesterday, and encompassed with infirmities as we are, we may from time to time be enabled to discern what the small portion of labour assigned to each of us is, in that immense work and incomprehensible plan, whose date runs coeval with time itself, but whose final consummation and glorious triumph are doubtless reserved for eternity.

No. 56. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1818, 3 mo. 26. *Birmingham*.—I know I can bid you as sincere and affectionate a farewell upon paper as if I held your right hands: indeed, I think the pen gives some persons, under some circumstances, the advantage of personal interview; and I am not quite sure that it may not,

just now, enable me to say with more distinctness and emphasis what I wished for your mutual encouragement, to say to you, before we respectively left this neighbourhood, that I never remember a time, since the commencement of our acquaintance, when I have more sensibly felt that we have all drunk "one cup," and have been baptized with "one baptism"—a baptism which I need not name—and have thereby been united in those bonds, and initiated into that fellowship, wherein, through the mysterious workings of Gospel love and power, those things are made bitter to us that once were sweet, and those things sweet that once were bitter; among which, I trust, we may number "the obedience of faith," and the desire to dedicate ourselves unreservedly to the Lord and his service. Under this renewed persuasion and hope it is that, without adding or diminishing, I wish to bid you a most cordial and sympathetic farewell.

J. H.

I have just recollected that a few words have passed between us on the subject of what I have called my "conversion," and which I have stated to be not yet quite fourteen years ago. This statement is correct; for though it is true that I assumed a plain appearance, and made many changes in my conduct, on the great shock I received at twenty-one years of age, yet, unwilling to relinquish such a captive, strange as it may seem, the enemy was suffered by various transformations, working by the imagination, the will, or the passions, as best suited him, to keep me in bondage until about the time specified: when, by a visitation as sudden, and perhaps as unexpected, as the vision of Paul, being about the eleventh

hour of the day, on the 21st of the 6th month, 1804, as I was travelling alone upon the highway; at such a time and manner it was, that "the prey of the terrible" was delivered, his chain was broken, and I was restored to that free agency which, perhaps, I had justly forfeited; and this free agency is the solemn ground on which I now consider myself to stand. Do not be too critical upon this humbling confession.

No. 57. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1818, 5 *mo.* 27.—Such is the difference of our present circumstances, that in the retirement of my rural occupation, a retirement attended with much entire solitude, I am at liberty to peruse and reperuse a letter, and, if I possess the skill, extract all its sweets; whilst to thee, thronged by town avocations of various kinds, a few compressed sentences may be an interruption.

With all my consideration for thy time, I must touch on a few of the heads of thy letter, which I will do with as much brevity as I can. That the Yearly Meeting is so large, and in its beginning so comfortable and interesting, was very satisfactory information; and as my staying at home was not an untried thing, so it has been accompanied by peace, and, shall I say, something more. On second-day, when the first sitting of ministers and elders would fall, I seemed united in spirit with my dear friends assembled there, and to enjoy with them a sweet communion as at the Lord's table, rejoicing at times, as doubtless would be their favoured experience in the God of our common salva-

tion ! What condescending goodness to a poor creature in the midst of care and business, by which that day was rather more than commonly marked !

I observe what thou hast said about capital punishments, and unite in thy desire that friends, if they move at all, may do it with firmness, and yet with wisdom. Thinking, as I do, that every question of jurisprudence involves something which lies below the surface, and therefore cannot be well digested, as indeed few things are, in a hurry, I have thought, at times, on this subject, and have read accounts of the extraordinary success of the Americans in taming, by solitary confinement, the figurative bears, wolves, and tigers of human kind, more dreadful than those of the forest. I hope the time may not be far distant, when this and other countries will be equally successful ; but do not think me cruel in saying, until that time does arrive, I think quiet honesty and unsuspecting innocence ought to be protected in the best way we can against deliberate, systematic, and voluntary wickedness ; and I wish things could be so ordered that Friends might be as active as others in promoting an object so essential, not only to the security of life and property, but to the very existence of social order.

This is not intended to throw cold water on thy view of the benevolent exertions of religion or philanthropy to spare the *life* even of the greatest criminal. I think the subject worthy the consideration of such a body as a Yearly Meeting of our Society, and I only desire it may have its due share of this consideration. Thou sayest that you have some valiant youth among you ; the young and the old are distinguished by their respective lineaments : age is charged with a coolness bordering on lukewarm-

ness ; youth with a zeal impatient of delay, forcing that which does not readily yield. Temper the ardour of youth with what youth calls the insensibility, and thou hast, I think, better named the *poverty*, of more advanced years ; for are we not, compared with what we have been, poor in health, in spirits, and perhaps in a still more important respect ? Still, should our dullness, our poverty, or whatever else we call it, keep the unfledged eagle nearer the ground, until he be able to bear elevation, and the fervour of a meridian sun, it may save him from giddiness, and the other dangers of a too early or too adventurous flight. Do not, however, mistake me ; I admire the well-meant and sanguine zeal of youth, when properly directed and steady in its purpose.



I acknowledge the justice thou hast done my Birmingham letter, in calling it affectionate. It need not make thee doubt thy own conversion, because the circumstances attending it may have somewhat differed from mine, seeing that the Author of faith and conversion, unlimited in the means for effecting any of his purposes, can produce these in an infinite variety of ways, either as best adapted to the subject acted upon, or on principles inscrutable to us, and for reasons which we cannot understand. But taking two extreme cases, of which we may form some idea, and which perhaps may not be of very rare occurrence,—whilst some minds suffer themselves to be almost insensibly allured by the drawings of their Heavenly Father's love, from one degree of growth and experience to another, more obdurate or inflexible spirits persist in their frowardness, until the acuteness of their sufferings, or the thunders of Mount Sinai, reduce them into subjection or terrify them into obedience. To this latter class of converts how precious,

how consoling the assurance—an assurance which, perhaps, could alone save them from despair—that He who died for them hath also ascended on high, hath led captivity captive, hath received gifts for men; yea, for the *rebellious* also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

Free agency is the ground on which I now reckon myself to stand. This agency, I suppose, includes or implies a liberty to choose and to pursue either good or evil, but whatever be its precise meaning, such is my sense of this liability, that its awfulness is almost continually present with me; it is a source of daily and nightly solicitude, and the warning voice “Woe unto thee, Chorazin—woe unto thee, Bethsaida,” &c., seems at times, as it were, to resound in my ears.

We have been sometimes cautioned against too great exposure of our most humiliating exercises and experiences; perhaps from the possibility of indulging too complaining a disposition on the one hand, or of administering discouragement on the other. But as there were those formerly who were commanded to go and tell their friends how great things had been done for them, whilst others were enjoined to conceal similar facts, so it may be now; and if an apostle of the first eminence proclaimed himself “less than the least of all saints,” may it not be allowable for those who apprehend they possess in their peculiar temperament all the disadvantages of the fall, to describe themselves, when they do it at all, as weaker than the weakest of all their brethren? And whilst they can feel hope, and believe many good things for others, and have also received much mercy themselves, are nevertheless unable to approach the sacred footstool on their own account with a more powerful plea than this, “Lord!

pity, pardon, and help thy poor, unworthy creature, who approaches thee not with confidence, but with confusion." And may not such an one, when addressing a beloved brother, with whom it is almost as impossible for him to dissemble, as it were difficult for him to conceal, simply describe, without either complaint or dismay, how it fares, or has fared with his inmost soul? if, notwithstanding, thou shouldst think otherwise, "forgive me this wrong."

No. 58. To SAMUEL ROUTH.

1818, 6 *mo.* 25.—I have felt for thee with religious friendship and esteem on the death of thy late dear mother, and under circumstances rather perplexing, in thy agricultural concerns. By these we may be taught that it is literally, as well as figuratively, by the sweat of man's brow that he eats bread, by the labour of his hands and the care of his mind; and yet even this needful toil may be greatly ameliorated by the lessons which, if not too dearly purchased, are of all others the most valuable—I mean the results of our own practice and experience.

I hope my present communication will neither prove unacceptable nor discouraging; but if it have any effect, it may be that of diverting the attention from things that are seen to those things that are not seen, and fixing it on that purely spiritual object, the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; for surely other foundation, can no man lay, than that is laid which is Jesus Christ, to whose merits, mediation, and intercession for poor frail and fallen man I therefore affectionately and earnestly commend thee with myself.

No. 59. To JOSEPH FOSTER.

1818, 8 *mo.* 7.—I must not omit telling thee how much sweet satisfaction I derived from the communication I received from each of you in the spring. It seemed just the thing to revive my drooping mind from that depression to which, under the conditions of a mortal existence, it appears that the best and wisest of mankind have in all ages been subject; and therefore, surely, I have neither right nor reason to claim an exemption. And yet, with gratitude to the Author of all our mercies, I have to acknowledge, with one formerly, that though sometimes cast down, I am not destroyed or forsaken; though perplexed by those vicissitudes, both inward and outward, through which I have to pass, I am not in despair. He who is emphatically denominated the Helper in every needful time, has hitherto never failed to aid me, and in various ways to support a faith which, alas! after all I have known of his ways and his wonders, is often very weak.

I was obliged by the history of my cousin W. S.'s ryegrass, which appears to me very curious; but I should think not just the same thing as the herbage of our best pastures, with which strangers appear to be so pleased. But thou shouldst know that I am not, nor ever was, more than half an agriculturist. In youth, my attention was divided with pleasure under many specious, some of them romantic, and others, very injurious forms. In middle life, I was much occupied by mental conflict, and this, too, of various descriptions; and now, my dear friend, as thou knowest, I am endeavouring to separate myself, in some measure, to the service of the Gospel of Christ, of

that Jesus who loved me and gave himself for me, and I trust hath called me by his grace : and though I do not affect humility when I acknowledge myself, almost with tears, the least, the last, the unworthiest of his servants, yet thou canst perhaps credit me when I say that my engagements, small as they may be in importance, are too many to allow of a very close attention to business.

No. 60. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1818, 9 *mo.* 8.—I sincerely congratulate thee, in that on thy return to thy usual residence, after a pretty long absence from it, thou hast been enabled to rejoice and give thanks, on the very spot which, though doubtless the former scene of thy highest enjoyments, has also been that of recent and severe trials. And is not this, I have been ready to say, the humble triumph of faith? Is it not the victory of a spirit measurably redeemed? Yet, whilst I thus infer from thy delight in the Lord, (for such, from thy “dissection” of thankfulness, I think thy delight must have been,) I do not regret thy being so far no poet as to be restrained or incapacitated from rapture, thinking as I do that the Christian’s joy should partake more of a certain old-fashioned, apostolic thing, called “trembling,” and that the very zenith even of religious rejoicing should never rise above the tranquil hope that “our names are written in heaven.”

I am sometimes struck with the chapter of beatitudes, on contrasting the characters on whom the blessings and woes are pronounced, finding as I do “the poor,” “the meek,” “the mourner,” “the peace-maker,” “the pure in

heart," among the first, and their opposites among the last; and this line of providential conduct towards the human race may, I think, be traced through much of the Scriptures, perhaps through the whole of the New Testament. I rejoice in the comfort thou hast been permitted to take in thy place and in thy God, believing as I do that there is a joy chastised, a satisfaction restrained in the way I have hinted at.

It may be as evident to thee as it is to myself, that from difference of temperament,—of our mental course,—we are rather prone to lean to the opposite sides of a subject, and this apparently without any design; whilst thou keepest guard on the right hand, I would place one on the left. Thus whilst a leading position in thy letter is, (I speak with reverence,) that a gracious and merciful God is no hard task-master, and that therefore He ought to be cheerfully loved, I perhaps may be allowed to think that for the same reasons He should be solemnly feared; and I dare say we shall both agree, that in the due proportion and exercise of these two principles, fear and love combined, like heat and moisture in vegetation, consists our greatest security, and deepest if not most luxuriant growth. After all, it is to me a very pleasant circumstance in our acquaintance, that our aim being similar, whatever route we take, we mostly meet at last, and not unfrequently find, on comparing our thoughts, that they have been previously running in nearly the same channel. Thus I was quite prepared to join in thy belief, that an entire resignation of all that we are, and all that we possess, is the road to the purest and sweetest enjoyment; and further, that it is the only thing that can lead us to that most desirable,

though too little desired state, of "having nothing, yet possessing all things," in the will and at the disposal of Him who thus really becomes our "all in all."

It seems that both thyself and thy dear companion (whom, though I have not yet named, I hope never to forget) had become much united in love to the friends you have lately left. I do not wonder at this, and I think with thee that thy last remark on the nature of this love was an improvement or good addition to the first, by considering it, in kind at least, as universal and complete, rather than an individual and proportionate enjoyment. This I think must be the case when, in a collective body, this precious influence is felt to pervade the whole, and circulate freely, as from vessel to vessel—a rare thing, of which I just know enough to believe in it; but may not even this sublimest spiritual sense with which we are endowed, perfect and one as it is in its nature, vary in degree according to the receptive power of different vessels, so that, like the state of which I consider it an earnest and a foretaste, whilst the capacity of receiving this blessedness may vary, yet every measure is full both as to quantity and quality, so that "he that has much has nothing over, and he that has little has no lack." This, in short, is my view of the happiness of heaven, a view which, whilst it admits of one star differing from another star in glory, yet, like the beautiful order of the planetary system, allows of no jarring or discord. All harmonize, all run their appointed courses, and all without envying, perhaps without knowing, the different degrees of consciousness which each respectively possesses: all, all unite in their Creator's praise!

I have read most of the volumes of Mary Fletcher with satisfaction, and I would willingly hope some edification,

satisfied with her wonderful narrations, strongly as they taste of a credulity which my early scepticism led me to despise, and which I cannot yet receive without much allowance, even believing as I now do that there are in the experience of divers a few very significant dreams, some remarkable providences ; and far be it from me to consider even wonderful revelations withheld from a favoured number, to whom for all-wise purposes they may be especially needful, either as means of conversion or in preparing them for vessels of honour and usefulness ; but in the belief of the author having been a sincere, industrious, and successful labourer in her Master's cause, as well as from many of her wise and experienced remarks, I really hope I am the better. The perusal of these books has also confirmed me in a notion I had previously entertained, that among the spiritual problems of our day, there is one which our forefathers, surrounded as they were by different circumstances, could never, by human sagacity at least, have predicted, and, like some of us, had it been proposed to them, they might have found it rather difficult to solve. I mean the tendency to union among the better sort of characters under almost every profession of the Christian name, though still widely differing in many opinions and practices. This I find to be a subject too wonderful for me, and which I can make little more of than indulge the hope which I think it naturally inspires, that good and not evil may be the ultimate result ;—at the same time, believing that there never was a time since the origin of our Society, when the members of it had more need to be careful that they do not get overcharged with better things than those merely connected with this life, but that each individual endeavour to know his own

religious station, and do his own particular duty, without too much anxiety as to the task assigned to another.

No. 61. To JOSEPH FOSTER.

1818, 9 *mo.* 18.—After ascribing much indeed to an over-estimate on your part of my acquaintance and correspondence, I must, whatever be the real nature or ground of such an association, disclaim all merit as due to myself therein, knowing most assuredly that in me, that is, in my flesh, or first and fallen nature, according to the experience of an eminent apostle, dwelleth no good thing; and that therefore, if either benefit or consolation pass from me, either by word or writing, to any of my beloved friends, the good originates in a higher source, whilst as a co-worker therewith, I am indeed a most unprofitable servant, doing only that which, whether considered as a social, reasonable, or dependent being, grateful to its Author, or benevolent to its fellow, it is my duty to do. As well as thou, and doubtless hundreds more, I am at times much tried, often seeming to myself, in these low seasons, like a pelican in the wilderness or a sparrow on the house-top; or to change the figure, if a star at all, one of the least magnitude, glimmering in midnight, and soon to be eclipsed. Thus, my dear friend, it fares with us in our pilgrimage; thus it also fares with our brethren who are in the world; and thus, for our encouragement, let us remember it has fared with the spiritual traveller during his state of probation, through all the preceding ages of time. Thus circumstanced, how great is the goodness of our Creator, in the variety of means by which, without destroying or even disturbing our free-agency, He imparts relief

to our weary and thirsty minds ; and in this way, I would repeat, how every way acceptable were those letters to me, which, whilst they renewed my former affection for their writers, led me, I trust, according to my own doctrine, to look beyond them, even to the God of all comfort.

Although the coast of Lincolnshire did not, I believe, suffer equally with many other districts from the extraordinary heat and drought of the summer, yet the late rains have been very grateful to us, in reviving the general aspect of all surrounding objects, so that both animal and vegetable nature may be said, in the language of ancient metaphor, “ to rejoice.” Our fields are fast resuming their wonted verdure—the woods are beautiful—our flocks and herds feed with increased content—a few remaining flowers blow—and, as with gladdened hearts, many little warblers hail this second appearance of spring. For comparable to that cheering and fruitful season is the present delightful scenery, which only seems to want the hearts of men well tuned, to praise, in the language of poetry and Scripture, the Author of so much excellency and beauty, saying,

“ These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Thyself how glorious, then !”

“ Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty !”

No. 62. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1818, 10 mo. 27.—My late Yorkshire journey, especially the Quarterly Meeting, does not afford me, in retrospect, all the satisfaction I could wish. I believe my faith ought to have been so much strengthened as to have helped me more than it did in the discharge of my own

duty, instead of which I suffered slavish fear, or something no better, to prevail to my hurt ; and to the setting thee a very bad example, which I am desirous of thus acknowledging by way of reparation. I believe I had better have been simply communicative in the meeting of ministers and elders, as well as in that for worship on fourth-day morning, wherein thou discoveredst my backwardness. And although motive seemed just at the time to shield me from condemnation, I cannot now look back without feeling it ; and my only present relief consists in receiving the correction ; for is it not a favour, even in the way of chastisement to be owned as a son ?

Partly from physical, but chiefly from mental causes, I was induced the other day to observe one of those fasts which I have sometimes thought to be not only salubrious, but indispensable. Shall I describe it as consisting not so much in an abstinence from bodily food, as a cessation from business, books, conversation, and as much as possible from the vain cogitations of a mind too prone to wander ; which, however, in these seasons of vacuity and weariness, I find it less difficult to restrain than ordinary. As I thus sat by my own fireside, which was made solitary by the absence of my son in his agricultural, and my daughter in her domestic arrangements—whilst thus sitting with eyes closed to the many great and good works that distinguish the present eventful and auspicious day, and ears deaf to the songs of righteousness, which are now frequently heard as from the uttermost parts of the earth—with my own unstrung harp upon the willows—even in this profound retirement, this valley of Achor, I waited not entirely in vain, but found my mind renewedly bound to that little handful of individuals, to which I am not more

united by birth and education than by judgment. O what I then felt, what do I often feel, for these my fellow-professors, persuaded as I am that many of them, I sometimes fear the greater number, are as really captives spiritually, as ever the Jews were outwardly! But the thing that, in these times of humiliation and retirement, has of late afforded me the most satisfaction and encouragement, has been the near unity of spirit which I have felt with the ministers of this my people. And if one part of these has had a greater share in my exercises, it has been the few friends of this description in Norfolk, who, from causes which I cannot explain, and which I sometimes wonder at, really feel as bone of my bone.

I do not forget our excellent advices to individuals of this class, one of which is to guard against a familiarity which tends to hurt. But I hope the engagement and exercise I have just been alluding to has a better source than selfishness, and a deeper one than imagination; as it seems both to originate and centre in the fervent desire, that whilst many are doing excellently without the pale of our particular communion, we may be favoured to know, and faithful to perform, our respective duties in it; that we may not only watch as on the walls of Zion, and build her palaces; but that, on still more sacred ground, in the hallowed interior of her temple, we may be qualified to intercede for her scattered and captive children in this ancient, fervent, and pathetic language—"Spare thy people, O Lord! and give not thine heritage to reproach."

No. 63. To J. J. GURNEY.

1818, 12 mo. 22.—Perhaps we are never worse em-

ployed than whilst reasoning on things to which reason is incompetent: this is one of our most vulnerable quarters. Here I believe the enemy has often stolen in upon me; here he has harassed, and I might almost without a figure say, harrowed, my soul. I therefore now find it conduce more to my peace and safety to be passive under all that I cannot comprehend or explain, feeling as I can feel, being what I can be; either standing still or going forward, and in both cases, as much as in me lies, nothing fearing, nothing doubting.

Still I hope it may not be departing from this rule into an unprofitable labyrinth, if on the interesting subject of spiritual attractions we suppose that, both in the church militant and triumphant, there may be such a thing as classification or degree, according to temperament, experience, and other affinities: a condition which I think may subsist without any interference with general service here, or universal harmony hereafter.

Thus we find, even while struggling here below, there are seasons and circumstances in which all the varieties of Christian character, possessing diversities of gifts and under different administrations, are yet found to acknowledge the same Lord, and, as if incorporated into one body, can unite in ascribing glory to Him, can, as if with one voice, unite in the highest anthem sung in earth or heaven, "Thy will be done." And is all this either more or less than an evidence or foretaste of that felicity which shall receive its consummation in a world to come, where countless individuality and endless gradation shall make up the vast, the blessed assembly of saints and angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect.

No. 64. To J. J. GURNEY.

1819, 2 *mo.* 8.—Among those meditations on creation and its Author, which often lead me to wonder, and sometimes I hope to adore, a frequent and favourite one is on that kind of simple power, or power in the abstract, which is not only dispensed to man, the deputy lord of nature, but to every creature wherein is the breath of animal life, over that small portion of matter to which the faculty of a will is attached. So that by volition only this portion of matter is to a certain extent under the absolute control of free and voluntary determinations. Nor is the limitation of this extraordinary power less remarkable than its extension, being defined by a boundary as complete and arbitrary as that of the ocean, to whose proud and restless waves it has been said, “Thus far shall ye go, and no further.” So whilst myself, my dog, or my horse, by a mode or agency as incomprehensible as it is evident, can with the greatest facility move the whole or any part of our own bodies, we have no such power by simple volition over the smallest part of another animal, whether of our own or any other species. We could not in this way, light as it is, stir the wing of a fly.

Now for the tale, were it not for a further degree of the limitation just adverted to over that material clog to which my own intellectual part is fettered, or had I the wings of a dove with skill to use them, I think I should not just now fly into the wilderness, but to Earlham, and might probably soon be placed by thy fireside instead of my own. As this style of writing cannot be taken for the notes of sorrow, so it may perhaps be as little suspected of any

alliance with sympathy ; and yet if I am not deceived, sympathy, sweet and sacred, and oftentimes suffering sympathy is the remote cause of my present attraction towards thee and thine.

Having always thought the subject rather intricate, I have been afraid of entering into discussion on the religious instruction of youth, lest I should embarrass rather than illustrate it. It seems to me to consist of various parts, on which, for want of viewing them distinctly, it may be easy for us to misunderstand each other. We have also diversities of gifts from the same Spirit, and different members of the spiritual body have not the same office, of which, to myself, at least, my own case, is a remarkable proof ; for whilst I entertain the most favourable opinion of many great and good works which are now going on in the world, I am so far from taking any decidedly active part in them, that as to any public step, by act or deed, further than a little money, I seem, to borrow a phrase, “ hermetically sealed,” my spiritual solicitude being *concentrated* as it were on this one point,—the individual salvation of those who are members of our own religious Society, each of whom, notwithstanding the privilege of being born in a country denominated Christian, I consider to be born into the world as much the child of fallen nature as the Icelander or the Hindoo, and consequently to stand in equal need of conviction and conversion to their own nominal religion with those who have never heard its name. And to the great proportion of such as remain in an unconverted or unregenerate state, neglecting, despising, or forsaking the privileges of their birthright—to this it is that I think we must chiefly ascribe the great difference there is between the present state of our Society, and that first

period of it, wherein all were convinced, and, as appears by its records, most of them were faithful.

Perhaps the exclusive anxiety which I feel to a much greater degree than I can express for my brethren and kinsfolk after the flesh, or by profession, may partly originate in the recollection of the means by which, through grace, I have become what I am. When I was young there was much less of outward endeavours among Friends, at least those of my acquaintance, to instruct their youth, than, however deficient we may still appear, has been the case in later years. And though I and doubtless many others had parents who taught them to read and reverence the Scriptures, as well as occasionally to peruse the writings of our early Friends, here was about the whole of what might be called our religious education. Yet even in this way I remember to have acquired such a knowledge of the sacred Scriptures, and of the leading principles of my own profession, as during the course of a lamentable apostasy never forsook, though it could not reclaim me. How often, when by a course of vain speculation and dangerous experiment, I seemed to be exploring the depths of the *fall*—how often in this mad career has the secret application of a text arrested my progress, and shaken the sceptic in the scorner's chair! How often too, when acting inconsistently with my principles, have I been assured to a certainty, that these deviations were neither more nor less than denying Him before men, who, if I died in this state, would deny me before his Father and the holy angels! and under a sense of the awful responsibility which I was thus, in violation of my knowledge, incurring, how often have I been ready to wish that I had never been born, or at any rate that I had not by birthright inherited so pure

and holy a Christian name as that which I bore, and almost daily dishonoured !

In addition to this, it was impossible for me to forget how unavailing were all outward endeavours towards bringing me out of this horrible pit, and that neither men nor books, even his instruments, had anything to do in plucking me at length as a brand out of the fire. Remembering this, I am perhaps the more fearful of infringing upon the office of that mighty Redeemer who thus mercifully wrought for me with a high hand and an outstretched arm. This consideration may possibly make me more desirous that neither myself nor those whom I most tenderly love may attempt anything out of the line of our respective appointments, nor in it, but so far as we may be required and assisted.

9th.—If parents and guardians of youth were as assiduous as I think the importance of the occasion demands in the work of their own salvation, a corresponding solicitude would be felt for those committed to their trust, and a way would at times be opened, when the Scriptures were read, to explain and expound passages of them in the life of truth ; and in a degree of the same life also, would they, as ability was afforded, be concerned to impress the principles of their peculiar profession on the minds of their children or pupils.

My son is gone into Yorkshire, so that I am left with only my young housekeeper Rachel. To her, on rainy days, evenings, and when thus engaged, I am a house companion. By way of reconciling this lively girl to retirement and herself, I am at convenient intervals reading to her *Bates's Rural Philosophy*. In this respectable performance, for such I think it, I happened, since laying

down my pen yesterday, to fall upon a passage which seems so connected with the principal subject of my letter, and is at the same time in such accordance with my sentiments, that I am inclined to detain thee a little longer by its perusal. "Since the original apostasy, man is become not only guilty, but depraved; and besides the pardon of his sins, needs the medicinal grace of Christ to heal the disorders of his nature, and enable him to exert his faculties in a due and spiritual manner, and thus to restore him to a proper use of himself. In the great business of education, of which we have been speaking, every method that can be employed without this divine aid to predispose and habitually to influence the heart of the pupil, however it might serve to supply him with those qualities which would render him amiable and useful in society, would fail to provide him with that virtue which must qualify him for heaven; and every subsequent attempt to acquire this qualification after he came to act for himself, would, without the same divine succour, prove equally inefficacious."—Page 157, 158.

No. 65. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1819, 2 mo. 16.—I have of late been under so much secret exercise, as to have but little to spare for others in the general, to which a long epistle to thy dear nephew at Earlham forms an exception. But commonly I have had enough to do to hold fast, craving patience, perseverance, and light upon an obscure and discouraging path. Help me, if thou canst, to desire these blessings. O these inward crucifixions! these deaths oft! yet what should I be without them? and I hope I am on the whole more de-

siours of rightly passing through such baptisms of the will unto death, than to be exempt from them : but I can hardly tell how this is. One thing, I believe, that were it not for gracious help in times of extremity, my danger would be extreme. But I am now enjoying a truly quiet morning, though in an every way outwardly dark and cloudy day, which I esteem a great favour. O the refuge from inward storm, what an inestimable, what an unspeakable privilege !

No. 66. To J. J. GURNEY.

1819, 5 mo. 6.—Yesterday was rather distinguished in my spiritual annals by a poverty and a pressure, at which had it been entirely new, I might well have been alarmed, or could I have believed, that it depended altogether on myself, I ought certainly to have been ashamed. But uneasy as it felt to me, perhaps it might be preparative to my receiving with a better understanding, and probably with increased satisfaction, the conviction which it wrought :—that the remnant among professing Christians in all ages, and as applied to our little Society, the remnant of this residue, who have been desirous of endeavouring—alas ! for the feebleness of execution—to live nearest to their Lord, in an entire dedication of heart, and unreserved surrender of their wills to his Divine will : these have always been a spiritually poor and tried number, who on comparing themselves not only with the worst of mankind, but with a numerous class of ordinary believers, under various names, who go on careering, as it were, in the paths of virtue, and who seem nearly prepared at all times to sing the songs of Sion,—such *they* might address with some

propriety in the language of an eminent apostle, descriptive of that narrowest part of the narrow way, in which himself and a few others, for few I must suppose them, were concerned to walk; see 1 Cor. iv. 9—13. Well, to this cross, as I generally find it the best way under every humiliation, it seemed to be the task of yesterday to bring my mind, and say Amen, not counting my life (especially the life of my will) dear unto myself, if so be I may finish my course with joy, &c.

No. 67. To J. J. GURNEY.

1819, 6 mo. 23.—. Whilst I congratulate this dedicated couple on their victory, how tenderly do I pity them! so much so, that I have even prayed for them, in that secret retirement, wherein I have been wont to put up petitions to the throne of grace; and on various occasions, to pour forth libations of tears, not to an idol, but to the true and living God. I have said, on *various* occasions, for though they have but one issue, how many are the sources of our tears! many are the causes, which so oppress and overcharge the heart, as to compel it to seek relief in this way. Joy, grief, sympathy, suffering, everything can weep but despair: *it* only precludes this last resource of weariness or affliction, turns heaven to brass, and earth to iron; and were it not for the torture of every nerve, might be said to petrify its unhappy victims. O thou bottomless, thou horrible pit! how in thy dark bosom is every evil found! from thy dread bourn how every good retreats! in attempting to portray thee, expression becomes lame, and description beggared.

I would now just say, that after all I have remarked about dear ———, and his wife, and much as I feel that I love them, I mean no compliment to mere human nature, nor have any view of improperly exalting one above another. Of them, or any other of my beloved friends, I would say with a deeply tried and experienced apostle, “God forbid that I,” or that they “should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Rather may we be able also to adopt the language of the same inspired writer : “For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.”

Having, in a manner of which I consider myself very unworthy, been permitted to share in thy aboundings, I am quite disposed, should circumstances call for it, to travel with thee in another direction. For as it has sometimes happened, so it may happen again, even those who are endeavouring faithfully to follow Christ, may not only subject themselves to the laugh and the frown of the worst of mankind, but by some of their movements may even excite the apprehensions of those who are engaged in the same cause with themselves ; but as all endeavour to keep their respective and individual places, and as patience and humility are abode under, I believe a right understanding of each other will generally be come to at last. Thus, as the sun dispels the fogs of our material world, so where all mean well, I apprehend will the light of truth, if sought after and waited for, scatter the perplexity, which perhaps for the trial of faith and other virtues, may for a season be permitted to rest as on the valley of intellectual vision.

No. 68. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1819, 7 *mo.* 3.—I thought our parting opportunity at Mildred's Court was even more than supporting, it was cheering; and might seem to make up for much that, as individuals in the course of the previous meetings, and the various exercises attending them, we might have gone through. The feeling was precious, and I thought had a tendency to renew and strengthen the bonds not only of public but of private union; and it left a very sweet confirmation on my mind, which is not yet dissipated, of the reciprocal disinterestedness and sincerity of our friendship, and may I add of its value also at particular seasons. For though we may sometimes think that nothing temporal can be dearer to us than our children, and we are sensible too of the high worth of our junior friends; still these are all the companions of another day, and however tenderly disposed towards us, cannot in all cases feel, as true contemporaries may feel one for another. They have not like these had time to hear and see the same things, their experience has not led them through the same paths—paths which, however erratic, dangerous, or bewildering they may sometimes have been, afford, on retrospect in life's declining day to the few remaining fellow-travellers, a social and sympathetic fellow-feeling, that perhaps nothing else could give, and which makes them very dear to each other in times of weakness or suffering.

. . . . I believe, that "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" in others, at least, may be congenial to the temperament of my own mind. Thunder and storm have, from very early life, generally terrified and distracted me, whilst

the softer descendings of the dew of Hermon have sometimes dissolved that in me which the tempests of Mount Sinai seemed only to paralyze. Yet doubtless these may sometimes, and in some cases, be the proper medium of divine communication. But how condescending is the goodness, and how incomprehensible the wisdom of the Most High, in accommodating the creatures, which He has formed, according to their various capacities and characters, which He alone fully knows ! Blessed be his name !

No. 69. To J. J. GURNEY.

1819, 10 *mo.* 25.—I have been much concerned to hear of Priscilla's late illness, but from what thou hast said, I hope she may be restored to her friends, and that not only her mortal body may recover its former strength and activity, but that her immortal mind may, through the remainder of her pilgrimage, be preserved firm on the sure foundation and Rock of Ages ; so that should a degree of reduction and suffering be allotted her, in time, whereof minds of a higher tone only are capable, she may through an endless eternity enjoy a portion of felicity, to which perhaps spirits of a certain order only may be commensurate. This view, though it may seem rather speculative, is I hope innocent, as I believe that in heaven there will be neither complaining nor want ; but that every vessel will be filled to its utmost capacity, and that all, both small and great, will unite in one universal Halleluiah of gratitude, thanksgiving, and praise.

Thou tellst me, that thou hast need of deep and abiding humiliation ; this I believe, whether they know it or not, is

the case of every son and daughter of Adam, though unhappily it does not generally appear to be so understood, at least not acted upon. To the thoroughly awakened mind, I should think nothing can be more obvious, as in this low valley it is that we not only find a door of hope, but discern the path of duty, and receive fresh commission and ability to walk therein.

No. 70. To J. J. GURNEY.

1819, 12mo. 29.—The tone of my mind is I think somewhat improved, insomuch that though not entirely free from solicitude,—for who can sleep on a mast?—I am in possession of perhaps as great equanimity of feeling as may reasonably be expected in a state wherein the wind frequently blows strong, and is often shifting its quarters, or, to speak more intelligibly, where fears within and fightings or perplexing circumstances without, are every now and then assailing us.

I have often thought of, but I believe never yet noticed, a passage in each of thy two last letters to me. The first arising out of an intimacy thou hadst then lately formed with E. H., whose mind thou hast described as just opening to religion, from whence thou hast found occasion on one hand to rejoice at the progress of good in “middle, high, and low,” and on the other to lament the operation of an opposite principle, in a great proportion of mankind, concluding with the expression of an earnest desire that *all* might be brought to the Redeemer. I trust I am thy companion in each of these feelings.

The other particular to which I am inclined to allude is the more literal interpretation, corresponding with thy own

experience, which thou art disposed to give to the seventh chapter of Romans, than perhaps may even by Friends be generally supposed to belong to it: here we are agreed also. To which I would add the appalling description of the proceeds of the heart of man, as detailed by our Saviour, Mark, vii. 21, 22, 23, and Luke, vi. 45, and then I think we have a true and complete picture of human nature, as derived from the fallen state of our first parents, —a picture which I think our system-builders might have contemplated to as much advantage without first inventing the new, and as it appears to me, superfluous name of *original sin*. This sort of coinage I am never very fond of, preferring the plain, unsophisticated language of Scripture. And as I think we have on the subject before us enough of obvious terms and obvious meaning to extort from us the exclamation, “O Adam! Adam! what hast thou done?” so on the other hand, “clinging close,” as thou hast aptly said, to the redeeming principle of life in Christ Jesus, we shall find cause to adopt this triumphant language of the apostle, “Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.”

Though I am neither casuist nor disputant, yet I think it is desirable that we should have a correct, and then no matter how concise a view of the ground we occupy in this our state of probation. In order to obtain such a view, perhaps it may be needful both to reconnoitre the number and strength of our enemies, as well as to fathom the extent of our own weakness and corruption, seeing that out of these depths of inquiry and examination the most availing cries for deliverance have often ascended to the throne of grace.

Not that I think all are alike assaulted by the common

adversary, or that we are equally plunged into the mire and clay of sensual and selfish corruption. We may sin, and come very far short of the glory of God, and thereby have ample cause for humiliation and repentance, without the actual commission of every crime into which some of our fellow-creatures are found unhappily to fall. Still I believe every one who attentively observes what passes within him and without him, I mean his own propensities, and the positive, unqualified wickedness, which among high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, abound in the world, will find a full illustration and living comment on the Scriptures to which we have alluded, and perhaps some justification of the conclusions we have drawn from them.

And now, my dear friend, let us who profess to believe in the saving grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ,—the second Adam—the Lord from heaven—let us, who make this profession, close our somewhat cheerless theme with a renewed effort to build each other up in our most holy faith, by recurring again to the solemn, yet joyous ascription, “Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift,” not only now, but for ever and ever. Amen.

I have lately been to my own Quarterly Meeting, which, perhaps partly from natural and partly from other causes, I approached under some discouragement; but as on some similar occasions, I returned well satisfied with having been there. So true it is, that it remains to be good even for the *very few* to endeavour to assemble together for religious purposes; as the bonds of unity and fellowship are thereby strengthened, and a degree of renewed ability frequently vouchsafed to hold on our way, if not with continual rejoicing, at least without daring to murmur or

repine, seeing that our sufferings are deserved, and our enjoyments altogether unmerited. The last is a sentiment with which I have been long, and perhaps I might say deeply impressed. There seems to be a harmony in it which reconciles us not only to the dispensations, but to the attributes of the Deity, with every one of which as the soul approaches perfection she becomes increasingly believing, and increasingly enamoured. She can then sing not only of wisdom, power, and goodness, but of justice also: “Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for Thee.” (Isaiah, xxvi. 8.)

No. 71. To J. J. GURNEY.

1820, 1 *mo.* 9.—I have often thought of Norwich since I left it, especially of thy dear uncle and aunt, who were then under much solicitude, occasioned by the recent afflictions of divers of their near connexions, the circle of which is so extensive, and its visitations of sorrow for the last few years so frequent, as must, I have thought, keep their sympathy in almost unremitting exercise. It is sometimes said that repeated strokes harden the heart, and that therefore the feelings of old folks are obtuse: I would say, or soften it, and therefore render them more acute; for strange as it may seem, it is yet not improbable that these opposite effects are by similar causes produced on different subjects. I would just remark that under every trial, whether new, or such as we have formerly known, there is not perhaps a better practical lesson than this, to let patience have its perfect work. Knowing the value of this lesson, and by long experience the need I have of it,

perhaps I may without boasting add, "herein do I exercise myself daily ;" with what success it does not become me to say—indeed I cannot tell—but have much reasonable ground for distrust.

I pity thy dear brother and his wife on account of their winterly and hazardous voyage to Ireland, on which thou hast made some valuable observations on the excellence and advantage of a firm trust in God. It is indeed an excellent thing thus to trust in Him at all times, and I believe a thing not entirely at our command, but rather a blessing upon our endeavours after it. In thus striving to support a faith too apt to waver, we are sometimes equally delighted and encouraged, by pursuing the ideas of omniscience, omnipotence, and goodness to the extent of our limited faculties for comprehending them. What security there appears in the view thus afforded of Divine protection, in contemplating the exercise of attributes which at once incline to all that is wise, great, and benevolent, with power to execute the wondrous, the magnificent designs, volition and act inseparably connected,—the numbering our hairs and the caring for sparrows,—the removing of mountains and the support of innumerable worlds,—all performed with greater ease than the most skilful musician can modulate the tones of his instrument !

It were difficult to imagine that after being helped thus to believe—that after such a delectable vision, we should ever again be harassed with doubt or fear, did we not know that poor human nature, amongst its many other defects, often acts as a preponderating weight against itself, so that were it not for the counteraction of that influence which is appropriately denominated an arm underneath, and a hedge

round about us, it were impossible to determine whither in our wanderings we might stray, or in our heights we might fly, or where in our descents we might stop. But thanks be to Him who has not only beheld, but preserved us through many difficulties and dangers hitherto ! Let us endeavour more and more to cast all our care upon Him, in the unshaken trust, that as we thus strive to please and to serve Him, He will graciously continue to save and to deliver us.

10th.—The above, with very little variation of language, was intended for thee a month ago : since which some variety of circumstance, and considerable vicissitude of feeling, have enabled me to enter more sensibly than perhaps I could then have done, into that particular state of mind which thou hast described by the expressions “ Vision dark—Faith weak—Fears many.” This surely is the time of Jacob’s trouble ; but here again, how are we relieved by a consideration of the Divine attribute of mercy, and supported by the consoling language of Scripture, that even from the time of Jacob’s trouble, he shall be saved ! (Jerem. xxx. 7.)

No. 72. TO RICHARD COCKIN.

1820, 1 mo. 11.—For many months past I have been so shut up, or so closely occupied by inward exercise on one account or other, as to render me less communicative than usual, even towards that small circle of beloved correspondents, with whom I have been the most accustomed now and then to exchange a letter. This state of my mind has been attended with some fears, indeed it is an occasion of frequent solicitude lest I should fall into a state

of supineness, or become a negligent occupier of the talent committed to me.

There are however two circumstances which afford me some relief. One is a full conviction that of ourselves merely, and in our own time and way, we can do very little towards each other's spiritual comfort or benefit, and that therefore when silence is enjoined us, it is the safest for us to abide in it. The other still more encouraging consideration is a consciousness that however feeble or suspended the expression of my feelings may have been, still I am not destitute of feeling; but that on the contrary, for the critical situation of our beloved country, the low state in many respects of our dear religious Society, my own individual responsibilities as a parent and as a Christian,—for each and all of these, I have according to my capacity or measure, been much concerned. Out of this very concern a hope arises of not being quite insensible or dead, seeing that according to a well-known observation, “whilst there is pain there is life.” And if such be the case, though this hidden spark of life should never, from the various weights that oppress it, shine forth with much effulgence, or rise into great dominion, yet it may possibly emerge in some degree from its present depths of obscurity. Be this as it may, there is one spot whereon, whether the storm makes sailing dangerous or the calm renders it impracticable, I seldom cast anchor in vain; I mean in the endeavour not to seek great things, either spiritual or temporal, for myself. And yet even here, such is our weakness, and such are the snares that are laid for it, that without the renewed and quickening energy of Divine wisdom and power, we may even in the quiet and pleasant harbour of humble resignation itself, become entangled or arrested in

our course, so as to fall short of fighting the good fight of faith, or running with patience the race which heavenly illumination, and that only, can from time to time discover, or in scriptural expression, set before us.

Under the discouragements which the Christian meets with both from within and without, and which I apprehend under one form or another must have been his companion in every age of the church, the discovery of a kindred mind must always have been, as it now is, a very alleviating and cheering circumstance; which more than most other things confirms us in the hope that notwithstanding all that through our declension has befallen us, we are not yet become a people forsaken of their God, but that such among us who truly fear Him are, as their forefathers were, truly precious in his sight, and by the spirit of his Son, are also like them made dear one unto another.

How sweetly is the badge of discipleship, to which thou hast alluded, still found to characterize and unite individuals of similar experience, and how cementing its influence, when like a garment of fellowship and a zone of concord it pervades and encircles those solemn assemblies, convened it is true for the more immediate services of our own Society, but extending, may it not be hoped, through the medium of this universal love, a salubrious influence to the whole family of mankind! and here I would just observe, that our Yearly Meetings of later years, and especially at their close, have seemed to me to be remarkably distinguished by the prevalence and circulation of that charity which I have faintly attempted to describe.

No. 73. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1820, 1 mo. 22.—We are said to be “creatures of habit;” perhaps it is partly owing to this, having been used to little else, that I feel so much interest for the support and revival of *small meetings*. I forbear to particularize, because we have only to look around us, and these instances, like the shades of brighter days, will start up in multitudinous vision; not however visionary, but real remnants of once different things. They must entirely fall, unless the rising generation so lay it to heart, as like the Ezras and Nehemiahs of old, to arise and build not only their own houses, but the breaches in the walls and palaces of spiritual Jerusalem. Do not think me desponding. I know the worth of many individuals in very solitary situations. I have also a high opinion of the capacities and resources of my younger brethren and sisters; but I must confess that I long to see, before my departure from this scene of visible things, a more decided dedication of their powers to the service of Him who gave them, and to the support of a Society which, without invidious comparison, I am bold to call, as to its principles, the *first* in the world; and were there a more general acting up to these principles by those who profess them, I am also bold to say, the world, though now incredulous, “should know it too.”

I am just now confined pretty much to the house by small ailments, and the severity of the weather. In the latter we have been presented with a phenomenon of changes, extraordinary even in this changeful climate. Within the last three or four days rapid thaw—intense frost—fair and calm—snowing and blowing—and this day

cold, but beautifully bright and clear ; all this in less time than I ever remember. On fourth-day last, in my way to meeting, I was gratified by the sound, most unusual in a fen, of fine cascades, clear as the water of Helicon, (do not smile as thinking me extravagant,) running from the surface of our pastures, which were too hard beneath to absorb them, into the ditches which make at once our drains and our fences. To-day, the very fields which then were almost a sheet of water, interspersed with some verdure, are again thickly covered with the white mantle, and from each of my windows I have the prettiest sight of self-made snow-balls, in considerable numbers, that I ever beheld, formed by the stormy wind of yesterday, and the peculiar temperature of the air. What a wonderful display is this, and on how magnificent a scale, of the works of Him who is perfect in wisdom and power ! It may not only remind us of, but illustrate the solemn interrogatories put to poor Job, producing a similar acknowledgment to his. “ I know,” said he to the Lord, “ that Thou canst do every thing ; and that no thought can be withholden from Thee.”

No. 74. TO JANE GURNEY.

1820, 2 mo. 19.—How precious is that unity of spirit which constitutes Christian fellowship ! at a time, too, when many circumstances of ours are so analogous to those of the ancient Jewish Israel, that some in the present day, who are no prophets themselves, can scarcely peruse the records of those who were, without a degree of fearful apprehension. I would not excite needless alarm. I know there is much that is valuable yet left among us, much also of declension, and consequent desolation : I am,

however, no prophet, and I think those who are should be careful in the exercise of their gift. Thou wilt therefore, I hope, preserve an equal mind, endeavouring to wait patiently and resignedly for whatever may be permitted to happen.

20th.—For some hours this morning I have been introduced into such a new communion with *you* in the love, and fear, and mercy of our God, as equally excites my wonder and my praise; and it seems as if it would be an act of manifold injustice to withhold the knowledge of it from you. In this situation, so different from what we probably each of us often pass through, I have thought myself the most favoured of men. And why? Because the most unworthy!—at least more so than any of my fellow-mortals of whose state I have any knowledge or conception; and this view of ourselves is sufficient for the purposes of individual humiliation and gratitude. Here we may perceive what a privilege it is, that, without confusion or interference, thousands may be under all these circumstances at the same moment of time, enjoying the same bounty of their Creator, exercising the same self-abasedness before Him, and offering the same incense of adoration and praise; or will it be a needless addition by one comprehensive expression to say, trembling and rejoicing in the beams of the Sun of righteousness?

Well, in the bonds of this love, in the feeling of this creaturely reduction, and at the foot of this altar, I again bid you affectionately farewell.

No. 75. To ANN CAPPER.

1820, 9 *mo.* 9.—Being on the domestic subject, I am inclined to acquaint thee with an incident which occurred to me lately. At our meeting on fourth-day last, which is usually very small, it so happened that myself, J. R., and L. made up the whole of it; when a little before the conclusion I thought it safe for me to tell them how much I had been desiring that they, my dear children by nature, might become the Lord's children by adoption; that so, when we should no longer assemble together as we then did, when I should sleep with my fathers, and be gathered to the house appointed for all living, they might be preserved wherever they go, and blessed in whatsoever they do. On rising from my seat to depart, I found myself so much affected, that, letting my children pass on before me, like one formerly, I almost unconsciously turned my face to the wall, and poured out a secret libation to the God of the spirits of all flesh.

No. 76. To SARAH SQUIRE.

1821, 5 *mo.* 10.—A query has offered itself to my consideration, attended with a willingness to submit it to thine; and this is, whether the time may not be nearly arrived for thee to quit thy hold, in great measure, even on religious friendship, though it may heretofore have been useful to thee, and try to walk by faith alone; or in other, and perhaps more intelligible expressions, to cease from looking much even towards those whom thou mayst be ready to view as instructors and fathers, that by thus

withdrawing thy attention from everything outward, thou mayst attend more closely and singly to thy own steps. For as spiritual gifts, even gifts in the ministry, are diverse, and their operation various, though all from the "workings of the same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will;" so, after all the help which, in a state of comparative infancy, we may be permitted to derive from instrumental sources, it is from this Spirit alone that our individual duty can be discovered, and adequate assistance received for the acceptable performance of it.

I say this, my valued friend, not with the coldness of a critic or the severity of a censor, but, I trust, with the tender solicitude of one who not only remembers well the days of his own childhood, with "the fears and fightings" attendant on his early steps, but who still oftentimes finds abundant cause to query with the apostle, "who is weak, and I am not weak?" For, alas! what are the oldest and most knowing of us, but, in common with our younger brethren and sisters, earthen vessels, wherein, through adorable condescension, a divine gift or treasure is deposited, that "the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us?" And as certainly as a vessel is distinct from that which it contains, so certainly are we, as men, distinct from "the new wine of the kingdom," wherewith, for the glory of the Giver, and the good of our fellow-creatures, we may be at times, to our own humbling admiration, alternately emptied and filled.

If on my own account, no less than on thine, there be at the present juncture one truth that weighs with me more than another, it is this—the danger of looking outward, and leaning too much to my own understanding, by which I have suffered deeply in days that are past, and

from which I am not even yet wholly free, though I well know that the necessary tendency of such a practice is either to elate or depress the mind too much, and thereby to keep it in a state of fluctuation and instability, unfavourable for distinctly hearing the still small voice of the true Shepherd. May we, therefore, without lessening our love for the brethren, or neglecting our duty in the church, (for I believe that, though difficult, this is practicable,) cease from all unprofitable dependence either on ourselves or on each other, leaning with increasing confidence on that all-sufficient arm, whereon archangels lean.

No. 77. TO HANNAH C. BACKHOUSE.

1821, 5 mo. 27.—In the silence and solitude of a nocturnal hour, wherein pain would not allow me to rest, and when the waves of mental conflict ran so high, that it almost seemed as if the end of all things were at hand, and that instead of gently descending in peace, I were about to be hurried as by the force of an irresistible cataract, into an unknown world—in the midst of this tumult of distress it occurred to me, that let the probability or the reality of the thing be what it might, I could do nothing to prevent it, and that therefore to resign myself to the event was the only proper alternative. I shortly after got a little sleep, when on awaking such was the change, that I could compare it to nothing so fitly as to that of the lion, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour or betray, (and who, when permitted, probably seldom fails to avail himself of our infirmities, in the season of extraordinary trial or weakness,) being commanded to his den, whereby my mind was restored to such tranquillity, and my faith

and hope were so renewed, that although other pains did not immediately leave me, yet they seemed indeed like those light afflictions, which were not only to be endured, but almost to be enjoyed.

I mention this to show the benefit of holy resignation, especially in times of the greatest suffering, into which I believe, by the subtlety of our unwearied adversary, temptation is sometimes infused ; hoping that by a knowledge of how it has fared with one, and doubtless with many others of thy brethren and sisters, who are in the world, thou mayst be convinced, that in all thy afflictions, multiplied and varied as of late they have been, no new thing has happened unto thee.

Indeed this path of many tribulations, is so far from being a new one, that it seems on the contrary to be the high road, by which, since the fall of Adam, the spiritual traveller has been conducted to happiness and to glory. Accordingly, we cannot read far in the Scriptures without having our attention turned towards it, with suitable instructions, how to conduct ourselves, and journey forward therein. Of these directions, the leading one seems to be, a resigning all that we have, and all that we are,—our own lives not excepted—into the hand of Him who gave us them *all*.

It appears, even at this time of the day, little short of marvellous to me when I consider, or rather when I feel, how many baptisms are necessary, not only to bring many of us to this point of entire surrender, but to keep us there, so that in the simplicity of little children, and in foolishness to our own wisdom, we may be willing to follow the Lamb whithersoever He leadeth, into doing, suffering, or rejoicing. And however difficult or impossible this attain-

ment may be, by the exertion of merely human powers, yet as we set it up for our mark, keep it constantly in view, pray for it, and press after it, I trust we shall receive adequate assistance in every needful time, and that ultimately we shall be made more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us;—for the Lamb and his followers, shall have the victory

I hope there is not a word in this letter that can be construed into discouragement, or that can make the way of truth appear a hard or a gloomy one: this would indeed be very foreign to my intention. The ways of the Lord still remain to be pleasantness, and his paths peace to the obedient soul; and though many and diversified may be the trials of the righteous, yet surely deliverance out of them all is ample compensation even in this life, to say nothing of the glory which shall hereafter be revealed.

If it may tend more unequivocally to show that to impart strength and comfort, without any mixture of alloy, is the only motive for my thus greeting thee, suffer me to turn thy attention to the following texts, by which I have sometimes been consoled and refreshed. “Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me.” “In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.” “Why art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.”

Desiring that the holy arm of our Heavenly Father may be underneath as thy unfailing support, I remain thy sincerely affectionate friend.

No. 78. To SARAH SQUIRE.

1821, 7 *mo.* 1.—Notwithstanding what I have said in a former letter, about being weaned from too much reliance on the aids of friendship, yet I am too well acquainted with their value to despise them, having often through them received both instruction and encouragement ; and I believe that now, as formerly, it is acceptable in the sight of our gracious Creator, that such as fear Him should occasionally converse, and otherwise commune together. Yet there are times, wherein, as respects the church or our families, we clearly perceive that unless the Lord build the city, they labour in vain who build it ; and at other seasons we anxiously feel concerning ourselves, that if the Lord help us not as our Preserver under trial, and as our Guide in the path of duty—if in both cases, He help us not, vain indeed is the help of man. And as this experience rather increases than weakens our fellow-feeling for human infirmity, I believe we must do as well as we can, as to the expression of it. When we are inclined and enabled to do so, let us not withhold more than is meet ; and when silence seems imposed both on tongue and pen, let us submit to the humiliation.

No. 79. To J. J. GURNEY.

1821, 7 *mo.* 20.—“From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous ; but I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me !” &c. This portion of Scripture has been raised in my remembrance

by the comfortable account thou hast given me of certain Quarterly Meetings, followed by the inquiry, how we fared in Lincolnshire? Wilt thou accept both as a general and individual answer, Quite as well as we deserved, though perhaps not so richly as some of us, when patience is ready to fail, may desire. But as thou hast well observed, it ought to revive us to hear the sound of such things; and it really is cheering to hearts not dead to joy, though not very prone to rejoice, to receive glad tidings of good from any quarter or any cause.

I am "resettled," after considerable wandering, at peaceful Gedney, which truly deserves thy epithet of peaceful, whatever mental causes may prevent or interrupt its proffered quiet. I am, however, pleased, and I think at times thankful for having a lodge in this wilderness—alias, in these fens of Lincolnshire, where I can rest a weary head and faint heart, especially on distinguished occasions of illumination nights and coronation days; and I perhaps never enjoyed this privilege more than at the present juncture, from having just heard of the dissipation which prevailed at a neighbouring town yesterday, where, as may be apprehended of many other places and circumstances, earthly glory was tarnished by almost every species of vice.

No. 80. To J. J. GURNEY.

1821, 10 *mo.* 1.—As it comes in easily, without study or constraint, I will just give thee my objection, in few words, to a practice which I fear prevails too much in circles with which thou art familiar, and wherein I am sometimes allowed to peep: I mean that of perverting and

confounding language, as in the case of substituting the word *proud* for *pleased*. I always dislike it ; but when I hear it from those who ought to know better, I am grieved, my zeal is kindled, and I am almost angry, yet I hope without sin. Were I as bold with the tongue as the pen, I could freely tell them that all pride is of the devil, therefore let him take his own, for what have Christians to do either with him or his works ? If what they say be true, they ought to be ashamed rather than boasting ; and if it be not true, they are then adding the sin of falsehood to a habit of absurdity. Am I not very warm ?

Thou art surely enough acquainted with Gedney to know, that as it respects meetings and the residence of Friends, it is solitary, and situated on a kind of isthmus, with the sea on the E. and N.E.; whilst on the S.W. towards Northampton and Rutland, there lies a considerable tract of country, over which we, as a religious society, are probably but little known. Thus circumstanced, it happens that, in passing from S. to N., or in the opposite course, more of our friends on Gospel missions call upon us than might else be the case, whilst others of them, from mere kindness perhaps, pitying our loneliness, come purposely to visit us. As we have neither rocks nor mountains, woods nor waterfalls, hot springs nor scarcely cold ones, it might seem surprising that such company should rather increase upon us : perhaps by the aid of a little superstition, it might be considered in one way portentous :—that my dear friends, some of them at least, thinking it probable that they might not find me much longer at the place which has long known me, have had a mind to take another look, possibly a farewell. Well, be it so ; for as the solemn prospect rather

calms than disquiets my spirit, I cannot deem it inauspicious, and am therefore more disposed to hail than to shun the omen.

Shouldst thou inquire why, seeing I am surrounded and supported by children whom, without unreasonable partiality, I perhaps may be allowed to consider at par, and favoured with friends who, there is good ground for believing, are much above it, why then, mayst thou ask, should I appear so indifferent, not to say weary of life? The first part of my answer must be taken from that portion of myself which I hope to put off with mortality, and for the rest consult the preacher Solomon, in his *Ecclesiastes*; read also, if thou think it worth while, an excellent poem by Samuel Johnson, entitled, “*The Vanity of Human Wishes* ;” and one, in my opinion, not less meritorious, in a little volume of verses by Jane Taylor, to which she has given the name of “*Experience*.” And should books fail to show thee, thou must wait until time and its revolutions shall demonstrably prove, and this I think they cannot fail to do, both the reasonableness and the propriety of my not only waiting, but sometimes looking,—may it be with patience and resignation!—for the last and greatest change.

By indulging in a strain so serious, I am far from meaning to put thee out of love with life, or its legitimate concerns, nor even with such of its enjoyments as are suitable to thy age and circumstances. At the same time, I am not willing to think myself so injudicious as the world in its wisdom might deem me, for thus introducing a grave subject, even to one who, although in the prime of his days, is somewhat relaxed both in health and in nerve; for my opinion is, that a near and frequent view of what it

concerns us the most to know, the ground we really occupy in our present state of existence, cannot possibly hurt us; but rather, as is said of Boreas and the oak, whilst it shakes the branches it will strengthen the root, making the arms more strong and sturdy, though it may lower its towering head.

No. 81. To H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1821, 12 mo. 29.—Strange as it may seem, this word *metaphysical*, by the retrospect into which it sometimes leads, occasionally affects me deeply. Of this the following soliloquy, the companion of my wakeful hours on the night after receiving thy letter, may serve as an illustration and a proof. And I hope that, without harm to either of us, I may in freedom and confidence impart these reflections of my own mind pretty much in their original form :—

“ O vain and delusive science, (if science we may denominate a philosophy falsely so called,) how much of sin and sorrow hast thou cost me ! How shall I so delineate thy character and features, that others beholding, may take heed of thy snares ? Shall I call thee a restless and fathomless ocean, or a mass of heterogeneous materials ? or wilt thou be better known and more avoided in the unsightly form of a paradox of unnatural combinations and contradictions, at once a chaos of darkness and a meteor of bewildering light, no less fatal and disastrous ? Ah ! whither didst thou once misguide, and where wouldst thou have left thy unhappy victim, had not that arm been made bare, which, under the strongest expressions and the boldest figures, the Scripture represents as the deliverer of

man from his most subtle and powerful enemies ! May my poor soul never forget the hour—for in less than one solitary hour (being quite alone) was effected my escape from these labyrinths of confusion and shame !”

Thus, or nearly thus, am I led to soliloquize on *metaphysics* ; but it is a portion of my mental history which I do not wish to be generally known, at least not until my own state of warfare is fully accomplished ; yet, if at any time in the course of a life which, for many valuable purposes, I hope may be prolonged beyond the date of mine, thou shouldst think the knowledge of such a case might help a poor traveller, faint and astray, thou art at liberty to make thy own use of it. Such characters are now and then to be met with, though I do not think the sins of thought are among the most prominent ones of our day. The multitude seem to prefer floating like bubbles down the stream of time. They have certainly a much easier, and, religion apart, perhaps as wise a course, as both will probably end in the same sad disappointment.

Still I think thy mathematical mind (for, if I too may guess, such was its bias) made a better election than mine of the subject of its youthful inquiries, inasmuch as shore, however sandy, is more stable than the fluctuating wave. But the shore even of the soundest philosophy is too yielding for the support of eternal foundations, as we have the authority of the lip of truth, confirmed by the history of all ages, for believing. By these testimonies, as well as by that which almost daily occurrence presents to our view, it may be seen that no attainments merely human are able to preserve their possessors from danger or from ruin. No, this preservation is only to be found upon that rock to which thou hast very appropriately alluded. This

rock, as saith the apostle, is Christ, against which neither the allurements of calm and of sunshine, nor the terrors of storm and of tempest shall be able to prevail.

31st.—I would now refer you at leisure to Cowper's "Truth," wherein may be found a fine contrast between Voltaire and a peasant; also to that sweet little piece of Beattie's, called "The Hermit," and to a few weighty lines in "J. G. Bevan's Letters," &c., at page 267, beginning with

"Let the bright beams of science shed."

My view in thus sending you about, is for corroboration of such parts of this sheet as may be considered an attempt at exalting pure unsophisticated Christianity, such as we find it in our Bibles and in our hearts, above all the wit and wisdom, systems and inventions, of fallen and helpless man. Of his state by nature not many have a lower, perhaps few so low, an apprehension as myself. This apprehension, I think, is supported in fact, by his ignorance, his follies, and his crimes; and in argument, by scriptural passages innumerable, together forming a conclusion which to me appears invincible, that without a Redeemer, of all the tribes of animated being which inhabit this earth, the human race is beyond comparison the most miserable.

No. 82. TO SARAH SQUIRE.

1822, 2 mo. 4.—I am not surprised that in the midst of so much conflict thy agitated mind should desire greater stayedness, and frequently sigh for a little repose. To obtain this, I would, as the result of my own repeated expe-

rience, recommend as much stillness as possible. And as stillness is more of a passive than an active nature, it is to be sought rather by yielding to than opposing the storm, suspending all, even our best thoughts ; and in this helpless, and peradventure almost hopeless condition, committing ourselves to the God of our lives, with whom, and his dear Son Christ Jesus, alone, the power remains of saving to the uttermost, those who thus resign themselves and their all to such adverse circumstances and events, as in his inscrutable wisdom He may permit to attend them in their earthly pilgrimage.

In the course of a life not exempt from trial, I have repeatedly found this passive submission to be all that I could do ; the only safe and proper alternative on which everything else has seemed to depend. And in fleeing to this last resort, I have scarcely ever been disappointed in finding shelter from the present distress ; and at the future, thou knowest we are recommended not too anxiously to look.

Poor Jonah had to remain three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, while the waves and the billows passed over him. And I have thought that the account of Paul's dangerous voyage may afford instruction and encouragement to the tossed mind. In his case it is worthy of remark, that even after he had been assured by an angel, that not only his own life, but the lives of those who were with him should be spared ; yet after this how closely must his faith have been tried, by what occurred previously to their being finally cast upon the island of Melita ! The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners—they had also to throw the precious wheat, comparable to the sustaining faith and hope of a Christian, into the sea ; and at last were not deli-

vered but through the terror and danger of complete shipwreck.

It is sometimes said to be an easy thing to give advice ; but I find it neither an easy nor a trifling thing thus to address a dear friend in her affliction. I have felt for her all that I say, and much that I cannot say ; and may the Lord, if consistent with his holy will, bless these my exercises to her strength and comfort.

No. 83. To J. J. GURNEY.

1822, 3 *mo.* 30.—What shall I say ? Boasting, we know, is excluded, and despondency, as thou hast well observed, with so much to encourage us, were equally wrong. Being very fond of a medium when I can find one, and as that, which if I can make it intelligible, may come nearest the truth, I must then tell thee, that in my case, as perhaps in thine and many others, the winter has sometimes been cheerly, at others dreary. Time has passed now and then sweetly, at other seasons sadly—swiftly or slowly along—probably in part according to the diversity of causes in constant and successive operation upon the physical and mental temperament of poor, very poor creatures ; placed in a state wherein perhaps every possible change is a trial, causing some of them deeply to feel—would it were the case with all !—the great need of a Redeemer, even to the full extent of the pathetic and fervent exclamation, “ A Saviour, or I die—a Redeemer, or I perish for ever.” But even when brought into these depths, and deeper we can scarcely go, there is yet no legitimate cause for despair ;—there is still, blessed be the Lord, a door of escape for us. Help is laid upon One that is mighty, even upon One who is able to

save, and that to the very uttermost, those who come unto God by Him.

But the time for singing of birds, as to the outward at least, being come, it seems almost natural for those who can stir, whether old or young, to look around them, and see if there is no part of the general business in which they may take a share.

As the hyssop on the wall, in common with the sprightly fir or loftier cedar, contributes to the beauty of nature, so the owl as well as the nightingale, the linnet, and the lark, the harsh bray of the ass, the terrific roar of the lion, and the tender bleating of the lamb, all unite in harmony, all proclaim to ears that can hear them, their great Creator's praise. I cannot tell which, but doubtless it is either my weakness or my fault, that, with so much opportunity and invitation, I am in general so little qualified to read and contemplate, as I think I ought, this divinely interesting volume of nature. I will however try to be thankful that I am not quite deaf to its instructions, or blind to its charms. Of this I had a renewed and pleasing hope, whilst "meditating at eventide," in a solitary walk, very lately, when, every storm being hushed, every sight was lovely, and every sound a song.

Shall I conceal from thee, that there is another voice which, if I mistake it not, just now comforts and supports my often drooping, I hope never entirely desponding, mind, more than any outwardly visible or audible thing:—this is the secret hope that it may be right for me to endeavour to attend our coming Yearly Meeting, an inclination which I believe thou wilt not mistake me if I say, rather increases than otherwise, by the probability of thyself, perhaps thy dear uncle, and many others being prevented. We should

I think be found at our posts so long as ability of different kinds is afforded. When this is suspended, or as must ultimately happen, shall entirely fail, may we, may every Christian combatant, whether reclining in weakness or departing in death, seek and find repose, not with the outward and carnal soldier upon the bed of worldly honour, but in a situation far more dignified and appropriate, at his once crucified, now glorified, Lord and Master's feet.

No. 84. To H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1822, 4mo. 22.—Of the relationship peculiar to a spiritual dispensation, and of the love which is at once its basis and its preservation, how much might be said! and yet to those who are really brought into it, and who participate in ever so small a degree of its benefits and its blessings, how little is sufficient! Treating on the love just alluded to in one of thy letters, thou made use of two expressions, that to me seemed peculiarly appropriate, as tending to show that this disposition was not natural, but divine; and I might have introduced these very words, in my attempt to prove the *distinctness* of Christian principle from every human attainment, and its *superiority* over every other possession of the mind.

Not that I wish, any more than thyself, to despise learning or deery philosophy. They have, as thou hast stated, their beauties and their excellencies, and may I think be made usefully subservient to religion. But they are too seldom willing, either to seek or to keep their places as her handmaids; and all that I want is to strip the first of its conceit, and the last of its presumption, persuading both with a philosophy, "true and baptized," to bend the stub-

born knee and lower the towering head, before that footstool at which I am sometimes led to believe all our hopes and our fears, our joys and our sorrows, our crosses and our crowns, should be humbly and devoutly cast.

I believe I was somewhat more than pleased by thy remarks, on the various manner in which the spiritual leaven operates, according to their nature, upon the different lumps subjected to its refining and forming power : it is indeed marvellous, perhaps incredible, to human wisdom ; and yet I believe that to the anointed eye of Christian faith and experience, it is pretty evident that such is the case. By this wonderful process it is that the different vessels of the spiritual house, or, in other words, the different members of the church or body of Christ are formed ; distinct as the hand and the foot, the ear and the eye, or any other parts of the animal frame : like these, unable to copy each other, or take each other's office ; and yet like them, all necessary to the well-being of that body whereof they are members ; and although agreeably to thy idea there is no room for imitation, there is much indeed for sympathy :—so much so that if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; and if one member be honoured all the members rejoice with it. What beauty, what order, what harmony in a church thus constituted, thus compacted by that which every joint supplieth, and thus growing up in all things into its head, even Christ!—and for what end ? for the edifying of itself in love. Here we may see the scale of gradation, leading to what thou hast called the sum of the whole matter—Love. And surely no principle is so much calculated to assist, to calm, and to console us. How sweet are the very names of the comfort and peace, which, as streams from their fountain, flow from it ! And perhaps

hence it was that the compassionate Redeemer made such free use of these expressions, when He wanted to refresh and to strengthen his fainting disciples under their trying prospect of his being about to leave them—"comfort and peace," "rest to our souls:" more rapturous enjoyments the militant church, with all its infirmities, has little cause to covet, whilst of those she stands every day in need.

Thou knowest the feelings of the natural parent towards those who, under Providence, have derived their being from us: we seem in them to live again. For these we have not only pleasures, but cares: not only hopes, but fears: not only sweet endearment and consolation to receive from them; but anxious, sometimes painful, duties to perform for their sakes. Thus probably it may also be with those who make any approach towards the character of fathers and mothers in the church. They are anxious not to neglect by indifference, not to spoil by indulgence; not willingly to grieve or disappoint such as may be looking towards them, and as it were asking bread at their hands; remembering the fearful situation of those who shall offend one of the little ones that believe in Christ. If these solitudes are free from selfishness; though it perhaps is difficult to say what is entirely so; and I really am so little of a moralizer as sincerely, I hope, to despise myself, as a very selfish being;—yet in so far as the dispositions and feelings just hinted at may carry any semblance of disinterestedness, I will not disclaim them, leaving anything further, either about myself, or my dear friends, whom I am now addressing, where everything ought to be left.

No. 85. To H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1822, 7 *mo.* 21.—I am inclined to offer thee the best, indeed all that I possess, my tenderest and most affectionate sympathy; and though this may be all that we have in many cases to bestow,—for what is gold?—I have hoped, that in the breast of a believer in Christ, sympathy is neither a despicable nor an unavailing thing.

I have long apprehended, what perhaps every one acquainted with its influence well knows, that the sympathy here alluded to is the offspring of love; but I had not been so fully aware, as of late, when brought under its fresh and frequent excitement, how much it is also the parent of supplication. Under its humbling and powerful impulse, we lead our sorrowing brethren and sisters to the last refuge of affliction, to the footstool of mercy; and there, placing ourselves by their side, we assist them in prayer, we pray for them with a fervency, too, not less than that which pervades and possesses us, when petitioning for the salvation of our own souls. Now, though this observation,—so slow is my progress,—has escaped me till grey hairs, does it not harmonize with the spirit of the Gospel, and does it not agree with loving one another as ourselves? If one is really felt, is it surprising that the other—prayer,—should follow?

No. 86. To H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1822, 8 *mo.* 31.—I still indulge a hope that Christian perfection itself remains to be as lovely in my eyes as ever, and so attractive, that under all repulses and drawbacks, I

cannot help feebly—alas! that it should be so feebly!—pressing after it ; with what success is known only to that Being who seeth not as man seeth, and whose thoughts being higher than our thoughts, and his ways higher than our ways, judgeth us, as we have cause to believe, by a very different rule to that by which we measure ourselves and one another.

How far advanced on the scale of the perfection just hinted at was the dignified apostle of the Gentiles! This, notwithstanding the humble views he gives us of his own apprehended attainments, is evident from the acknowledgments which truth, and a desire to edify others, sometimes extorted, as it were, from his lips or his pen. In 2 Cor. xi. 23–28, after recapitulating the almost unparalleled sufferings and dangers that attended his Christian course, we find him making this important and striking addition, “ Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.”

Whether we view the apostle Paul’s character by parts, or as a whole, we can scarcely refrain from an astonishment attended with this peculiarity, that however surprised, we are neither offended nor dismayed : on the contrary, we seem so united to him by affection, admiration and sympathy, as almost to feel ourselves in his company ; at least we return from our meditation with renewed desire to run like him with patience the race set before us, and to be found with him in the footsteps of the flock of Christ’s companions.

I really felt, and still feel, affected by the perusal of the intimate exposure of thy sufferings, bodily and mental, which thou hast laid before me, and I perhaps feel the

more sensibly on this point, from the lively recollection thereby excited of things which, under various circumstances and at different periods of my life, I have also suffered ; especially of that which appears to have been a grievous annoyance to the heaven-bound traveller, in ancient as well as in the present times, that “when we would do good, evil is present with us.”

Perhaps there are few of our spiritual trials more perplexing than this, which may account for the memorable exclamation, “O wretched man that I am,” &c. ; and when accompanied by reduction from other causes, it must have an additional tendency to keep us weak and low, which may very possibly be the design of him who thus assails by his darts, and seeks to overwhelm us by his floods. For I believe it is an old trick of this our adversary to place evil before some minds at such times and in such a way, as that he may more easily succeed in another of his deepest devices, by persuading them that they have in thought at least joined with some of his temptations, though from the very bottom of their souls they feel the deepest abhorrence of them all. But as one of our early friends has well observed, though these things may be called *our* temptations or buffetings, yet they are the sins of the enemy and not ours, as he would falsely insinuate ; and we may therefore return them to whom they belong, endeavouring at the same time to be as quiet as we can ; and thus in due time we may find, as I trust thou hast repeatedly found to thy comfort, that “when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him.”

In the early part of my own life I was dreadfully harassed by evil suggestions, involuntarily excited in my mind, and charged upon me as sins ; and being in a state

of unbelief and disobedience, instead of being faithful and submissive to that which could only have wrought my deliverance, what I suffered in these conflicts is indescribable ; and so artful was the author of them, that they were of a character which I could not disclose. I was therefore almost distracted, and concluded that there was not such another case in the world as mine. How far this might be I cannot tell, though it is probable that it also was false, and intended to finish the business of driving me to despair ; for ever since I became more willing to make the best use of my afflictions, either by endeavouring to bear them patiently, or by seeking and accepting a hand of help, I have seldom met with a trial that has not its parallel in the experiences of others ; leading me to conclude that no new thing has happened to me ; and that according to the consoling language of 1 Cor. x. 13, no temptation has taken me but such as is common to man.

I am aware that self is a dangerous enemy, and requires much watching against ; but as in our speculations we are very prone to push even good things too far, I am not quite certain that we do not in this way sometimes refine too much upon what we call self-love, and for fear of indulging it improperly, really refuse or pass by the comfort, help, and strength which are mercifully designed us. The being commanded to love others as ourselves, appears to be so far from precluding a necessary care for our own preservation and happiness, that the manner in which it is supposed we shall, and the degree in which it is allowed we may, love ourselves, seem not only to be recognized by this simple and sublime precept, but to be made the standard and criterion of our feelings, and of our behaviour towards others. And as surely as it is lawful for a drowning

man to use means for his deliverance, so surely do I believe that it is not only allowable, but a duty for the sinking mind to accept, with gratitude to its great Preserver, any of the various means which He may be pleased to offer for its assistance, amongst which the records and communications of those who have travelled, or who are travelling the same path, may form no inconsiderable part. Witness in this respect the incalculable value of the Holy Scriptures, as well as the oral and written testimonies even of our cotemporaries.

We have a chain of evidence, and a cloud of witnesses, male and female, old and young, high and low, learned and unlearned, all testifying to a truth, from which it seems equally difficult to withhold our assent, or refuse to accept consolation, that in all our baptisms and exercises no new thing has happened to us.

No. 87. To J. J. GURNEY.

1822, 11 *mo.* 8.—It may not be always easy for the Christian to resemble what I think is fabled of the nightingale—sing with his breast upon the thorn which presses it; nor may it be much more easy for him to sing the songs of Zion in a strange land; and yet, though difficult, I have thought these things, or things comparable to them, may not be impossible. All things, it is said, are possible to him that believeth. May it not therefore be possible for the believer to sing the sweetest of all melodies, the song of resignation, in the hour of adversity and trial? May it not be possible for him to take down the harp from the willows, and contrasting the goodness and mercy which have followed him all his life long, with his own imbecility

and unworthiness, chant the praises of his Preserver and Redeemer beside the proud waters of Babylon—even though her swelling waves, many in number and mighty in strength, should despise his humble and solitary strain?

A saying of the psalmist, when addressing the Most High, “In the multitude of my thoughts within me,”—and alas! what are merely human thoughts!—“thy comforts delight my soul;” and the experience of one *less* distinguished under trials, (avoiding the stronger term, conflicts,) which he has lately passed, or is now passing, convince him of the possibility of offering the sacrifices of prayer or praise, even in the face of opposition and discouragement. Yes! there are resting-places for the Lord’s children and servants, though they may at times but resemble a “sunny island in a stormy main,” or “a spot of azure in a cloudy sky.” And at other seasons, when comfort seems to stand afar off, and has been long and vainly sought, we at length find it connected with the remembrance of some beloved and absent friend. Indeed, this having been my case within the last few days, when thinking of thee, is the present inducement for taking up my pen. O that the gracious Being, who even whilst inhabitants of this vale of tears, has brought us to some knowledge of Himself, of ourselves, and of each other, may so enable us to walk before Him with acceptance during the remainder of our stay in it, as that we may ultimately receive in a better world, in such mode and degree as may be consistent with his holy will, a full consummation of that happiness, whereof, though most undeserving, He has given us an earnest and a foretaste here below!

I think thou canst believe that I do not thus express

myself, from either the constant or the very frequent redundancy of heavenly good ; but being at the present period more disposed to gratitude than to complaint, or even to silence, I am inclined to invite thee, my dear friend, to join me, if it be but as for a moment, in commemorating the Lord's gracious dealings with our souls, that thus we may exalt his name together. For though to our dim sight and limited views, the number of such as are thus disposed to praise Him is either few or little known to each other, there seems the louder call upon those whose hearts may be quickened and united therein, to be diligent when ability is afforded, in the discharge of this sweet and sacred obligation, though in so doing they have no more to glory in than had the apostle, who declared that necessity was laid upon him, yea, that woe was unto him, if he preached not the Gospel.

No. 88. To H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1822, 12 *mo.* 28.—One of my most interesting meditations of late has been the unworthiness of man, contrasted with the mercy of his Creator, especially in that most delightful and all-important point, the forgiveness of sins ; a theme at once so simple and so sublime, so brief in description, yet so inexhaustible in its nature, so adapted to a “worm,” and to “God,” that whenever a little capacity for indulging it is granted, I think we need not be afraid of the result, which I suppose will generally be shame and confusion to ourselves ; and glory where it is, and where it can only be due. Under some little renewed sense of these things, can we not, my dear friend, unite in the language,—thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift,

and for all his other countless mercies, both in nature and in grace?

No. 89. To H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1823, 1 *mo.* 17.—With thee I know what it is to return low and depressed, even from meeting; nor am I a stranger to those disquieting doubts and fears which are such close trials of our faith. Whilst to be as humble as I ought, when things go the best with me; and as patient as I should be in the hour of adversity, simple and self-evident as the justice of these propositions is, I have always found to be amongst the hardest practical lessons of the Christian school. In the first case it is difficult to keep our feet; and in the last, not much less so to hold up our heads. Perhaps there are few things more likely than the knowledge, that this sort of experience runs more parallel in different subjects than we might suppose, to enable individuals really to sympathize with each other; under which expression I now include the entering into each other's spiritual concerns, and breathing for one another's welfare and preservation in the way of holiness and peace: and to trace the lines of the reciprocal experience here alluded to, may possibly constitute one of the purposes of that sort of religious intercourse which, in a very interesting chapter of the Bible, is called speaking often one to another. (Malachi, iii.)

The time with me has now arrived wherein many of my temporal prospects are closed, and others seem to be so fast closing, that in respect of many circumstances of high and allowable satisfaction in their time and place, it might almost be said, "I rejoice not;" and though I may not al-

ways be able, perhaps few have this constant assurance, “rather to rejoice that my name is written in heaven,” I think I could nevertheless rejoice, and that with joy unspeakable, “to wake and find me” in the lowest mansion there; and yet however we may desire this glorious and unmerited exchange, (for *all* is of mercy,) from probation to unalloyed fruition, we must not be too selfish. We ought to consider those to whom our continuance even in this valley of humiliation may be either pleasant or serviceable; and we ought especially to endeavour to wait with patience the Lord’s time for releasing us. I hope I am thus striving to wait, though it must be acknowledged attended by certain longings which I cannot at all times suppress; even now gently conflicting emotions produce a tenderness which I am thankful to find is neither bitter nor painful. I should scarcely, however, have dared to be so explicit on so solemn a subject, did I not rely upon thy candour, and at the same time recollect the case of an apostle, as described, (Phil. i. 23 :) “I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.”

No. 90. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1823, 1 *mo.* 28.—Thy letter of the 13th was truly welcome to me in cheering this solitude, and breaking, without disturbance, the stillness of which I have a considerable portion; and, as it seems, thy mind had depicted not a very small part of both, sitting in my chair.

To seclusion I was born, down a lane with which thou art acquainted, and having now passed more than half a

century in it, I am very much reconciled to this part of my lot; and as to stillness, though contentment in it may be in some sort constitutional, yet I believe it is much more owing to certain turns and circumstances in my life, some leading and others driving me to seek in quietude a refuge from myself, from the enemy, and from the world. From myself, I say, because from this quarter I have had much trouble, and from other causes, some together leaving me at times but just in possession of life and reason. But in the depth of my extremity, I have again and again, in unutterable mercy, had quietness offered me, as a shelter and a refuge; so that I have much cause to speak well, and none to complain, of a state which I know by man would be called insipid and dreary.

I noticed thy blanks, and observed the delicate fear which prevented thy filling them up; and it has brought to my remembrance, having once stumbled on the same subject in one of the few letters which I wrote to thy deceased relative J. G. Bevan, who in reply, whilst he commended my tenderness, and though no man was perhaps more cautious in this respect than himself, yet he seemed careful to guard me against a too fearful scrupulosity as to the use even of the most solemn words when our subject required it, and the mind was impressed with a due reverence. Between this and a profane use of the sacred name he drew a contrast, which we know to be great; but I think our present objection lies against something between these extreme points,—a familiar, incautious, unnecessary, and therefore vain custom, of solemn trifling with the awful name and attributes of our great and holy Creator. I have known professors, and even teachers of religion, who seemed as if they thought this practice meritorious, whilst, with my

views of the subject, it has felt almost as affecting to me as the profane swearing of the ill-informed and vulgar. It must however be acknowledged, that some of the Scriptural writers, as David, Paul, and others, have used a liberty in the case before us, wherein it may be the safest for us to follow them with devout, but not with too fearful steps; perhaps the true medium may lie here.

My reading of the Scriptures in early life, perhaps like thy own, was too desultory, and my memory very imperfect, so that from these sources I had little or nothing to expect. What remained for me, therefore, but to humble myself, and instead of seeking great things, or aspiring after high attainments, to become little or low in my own eyes, if haply I might find that simplicity of a little child, without which we are told the kingdom of heaven cannot be entered, and discover that foolishness in which, if a man would be truly wise, he must be content to appear? In this path, and with these objects in view, I have now been for near twenty years endeavouring to travel; with what success on the whole is known only to Him who knoweth all things, and with how many inequalities, too obvious to myself, I will not weary thee with enumerating.

I sometimes think it is both a consolation and an encouragement for those, who it may be have studied the Scriptures too little in their youth, and whose loss of memory prevents their entering upon such a study now with much prospect of advantage; I think it is an especial favour to such, that amidst all their ignorance and emptiness, no greater things are required of them than they are able to bear, and that they are furnished by the Good Remembrancer with portions of Scripture as they want them both for their own benefit and that of others. Wherefore,

my dear friend, let us not be too much discouraged, though we should have to class ourselves as among the least who believe in Christ, but rather forgetting the things which are behind, whether of omission or commission, which can neither be altered nor recalled, let us press forward to the things that are before, trusting (I desire to speak it with becoming reverence) to the mercies of God, and leaning on Him, on whom archangels are said to lean, and who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

In reply to a kind inquiry at the beginning of thy letter, as to how I am, and what are the prospects around me,—in *spirituals* I am surrounded for many, many miles by few fellow-professors; nor is fewness all that might be mentioned; yet I sometimes hope that even in this stripped district, a remnant are not forsaken; and I thought so particularly at our last Quarterly Meeting, when I was refreshed by the sight of a small number of friends, with some of whom I have been long accustomed to meet; others of them are “the youth of another day,” yet interesting to me for their fathers’ sakes, and I hope I may say for the truth’s sake. The subject of the free love and mercy of our Heavenly Father was much the companion of my mind whilst assembled with them. As to *temporals* around me, if that made any part of thy inquiry, they continue to be very discouraging;* and the situation of many of my neighbours really affects me at times almost beyond what I can describe: but it seems to avail nothing complaining; we must therefore endeavour to bear.

* Alluding to the depressed state of the farming interest.

No. 91. TO SARAH SQUIRE.

1823, 2 *mo.* 21.—I can feel for thee under the buffeting of Satan, whereof in the shape of a wandering imagination, thou so pathetically complained. This mode of his attack, including both the roaring of the lion, the subtlety of the serpent, and many nameless presentations, is in itself no new or strange thing, though in appearance both new, strange, and terrific to the individual who has not been much, if at all, accustomed to such conflicts. I was early acquainted with them myself, so that before reaching twenty years of age, I was almost driven to distraction. The short petition, “Lord ! help me,” which thou hast mentioned as one that has sometimes escaped thee when under deep trial, has forcibly reminded me of perhaps the first fervent prayer I ever put up,—not in a temple made with hands,—not in any congregation assembled for worship,—but in solitude, under the magnificent canopy of the over-arching heavens, and with a retired corner of a haystack for my altar : here I cast myself in great agitation on my knees, and exclaimed, “If there be a God in heaven, I pray Thee help me.”

Nor was this the only period of my life in which I have been thus pursued by him who is described as “going about,” &c.—who was permitted to prove Job, to withstand Joshua, and even to tempt the dear Son of God himself ; for since I have been more decidedly endeavouring to serve and to please my Creator, and to be what He would have me to be, I have sometimes been thus hunted, from day to day, and from place to place. Once in particular I recollect, when on a little turn-out with two women friends,

who were travelling in the work of the ministry, I was grievously tried with wandering thoughts from meeting to meeting; my very soul abhorred them, and at length a language to this effect sprang up in the secret of my heart, "If I have sinned, I pray Thee, forgive me; but if these things are for the trial of my faith and patience, I submit." Upon this the enemy vanished, and I was enabled to pursue the remainder of my journey in satisfaction and peace; and it is somewhat remarkable how useful I find the remembrance of this circumstance, even to the present time, so much so, that when followed, and might we not almost say insulted, by this malignant spirit, I can generally by prayer and patience foil, or at least silence him.

Although no consideration ought to reconcile us to sin, there are I think several which may prevent our being too much surprised at temptation, or from viewing it as a thing inconsistent with our probationary state, of which perhaps, speaking after the manner of men, it might be almost said to form an integral part, wherefore "Blessed is the man that endureth it;" "To him that overcometh will I give," &c. But if there were no such thing as temptation, there would be none to endure, and were there no opposition, there would be nothing to overcome. Were there none of these, there could be neither warfare nor victory, nor is it probable we should have been favoured with a promise and declaration, which I consider as one of the most precious left us on sacred record. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which *shall come upon all* the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

Do not think, however, that I would assume the office of a preacher to thee. I am only giving thee a leaf of my

experience, to help thee against our common enemy, in a case wherein I have had, and may yet have, many a combat with him. For thou hast not been mistaken in supposing, that notwithstanding my being further advanced in age than thyself, yet I find amidst the vicissitudes which surround me, stormy night seasons, which not unfrequently either to my weakness or my impatience, perhaps to both, seem long, dark, and dreary. Yet, like thyself, I have nothing of which I would complain, rather let me respond to thy sweet and moving ejaculation, "O that the good Pilot may guard and protect us!" and let us endeavour to be of good cheer. I hope and trust *He will*.

No. 92. To J. AND H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1823, 3 mo. 28.—Whilst desirous for myself never again to aspire above the docility and dependence of a little child, I feel that there is a sense in which some of the junior branches of the Christian family may be addressed as dear children by their elder brethren and sisters, to whom they are given by the universal Parent as "dear children" in the truth. Between these different classes of society there exists a reciprocal and appropriate intercourse of comfort and of help. How beautiful, beheld only in vision, is this part of the divine and spiritual economy! but how valuable in possession to those who have wandered in a far country, and there spent all their substance, is a readmission to this and all the varied privileges of their Heavenly Father's house! How diligently, yet in how quiet and unassuming a manner, I sometimes

think, such should go about the business assigned them, that so they may neither interfere with the concerns of others, nor interrupt the innocent enjoyments of those who more happily have never been guilty of equal aberrations from the paths of rectitude and duty! Will you not rather incline to pity than reproach these penitents, whoever they are, and wherever you find them? For the present I take leave of my subject, with an acknowledgment of its being one of the most interesting I ever contemplate, and one from which my mind is seldom long separated: those who have themselves been aliens and exiles learn to know the heart of a stranger.

Though I consider myself principled against that praise of men of which I think even the better part of the world is too lavish, I deem it right duly to appreciate and gratefully to acknowledge, whether immediately or instrumentally conveyed, the inestimable value of the greatest of all blessings *Love*,—our solace in time and our hope as to eternity, without which the first would be more of a wilderness than it is, and the last would present but an awful uncertainty.

The value of even words fitly spoken consists in their application to our understanding, or, which perhaps is a distinction without a difference, to the openness of the understanding to receive them. I think also that this capacity for receiving them may depend either upon the circumstances in which we are placed, or on the influence of that principle which shall bring all things needful to the remembrance of those who receive and believe in it. It is generally by one of these means, or by them both conjointly, that not only the language of Scripture but that of our friends, whether written or vocal, can be made truly

useful to us, either as doctrine, reproof, or instruction. We cannot, at least I cannot, carry the Bible in my head ; and yet what cause for thankfulness I find in having portions of it, often very brief ones, presented to my mind when I most want them ! Such as seem more particularly for my own use are not always of the most gratifying nature ; perhaps nothing but such a passage as the second and third verses of the thirtieth chapter of the Proverbs, “ Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy,” will at all apply. This, on turning to it, thou wilt see is rather homely fare ; yet however unpalatable, when hungry enough to receive it, I have found it good both as food and medicine. As the first, it might be compared to strong meat ; and as the second, it is an especial antidote against pride in its various branches.

H. has I think truly observed, that it is of no moment from what causes the mind becomes reduced. Admitting this, I think its reductions may be sometimes owing to obvious, at others, to more latent or even incomprehensible causes. Of the latter description is that state of feeling which, leaving the understanding perfectly clear, neither proceeding from reason nor imagination, *seems* to threaten us with annihilation. And though I am far from believing it to be the will, yet I so much believe it is in the power of the Creator to cause “ the spirit to fail before Him, and the souls which He has made,” that were the proofs to which I have alluded suffered to continue, it might possibly perform what it threatens. The subject, however, being as I have said incomprehensible, it is not in human language to do it adequate justice ; perhaps it may bear

some comparison to the falling of that stone which we are told shall grind to powder those upon whom it descends ; or perhaps still more to the withdrawing of that sustaining power which not only upholds the worlds, but is equally necessary to the preservation of individual existence.

I know I am upon sacred and delicate, yet, unless my own sensations in some of the most memorable moments of my life have greatly deceived me, I think I am not on dreaming or fabulous ground, and therefore perhaps it is that I am the more desirous of making myself intelligible, to one at least of those who, having passed through more than ordinary reductions both of body and mind, may be the most likely to understand me. With this view I will venture to add, what I never ventured on paper before, that these mysterious baptisms (for are we not sometimes made wonders to ourselves ?) have to myself received their most striking illustration, from the circumstance of an animal, suppose a bird or a mouse, placed under the receiver of an air-pump, and the air gradually withdrawn from it, until after acute suffering it becomes at length torpid and to appearance dead ; but the vital spark not being quite extinguished, on a readmission of the element of which it has been deprived, the poor creature revives, and in a short time exhibits all its former sprightliness and energy. Is not this somewhat emblematic of a mind cut off from all sense and feeling of good, until He who is its resurrection and its life shall appear for its relief, when it is once more united to the living ; it is again restored to all the purposes of life and duty.

Now though it may be of no moment, or even might not be good for us, to know how all these effects are produced in and upon us, yet I have thought this species of

humiliation, perhaps the deepest of which we are capable, may be the most effectual of all others upon minds not only conscious of their own powers, but made confident in them by that kind of knowledge which by our limited understandings is deemed, and perhaps as far as it extends is rightly called, demonstrative.

And truly it requires no common influence to bring minds of this description from the heights of their Carmel into that valley where the Lord will condescend to plead with them. And yet how generally is the extraordinary course of mental exercise, which He sees to be necessary for this important purpose, misunderstood, or rather not understood at all, by the natural man!—professors of medicine often blending it with what they call nervous affections; and professors of divinity, sometimes still more in the dark, bestowing upon it the opprobrious and degrading epithets of mysticism, enthusiasm, and fanaticism.

I hope these observations will have no tendency to depress thee, or lead thee into a train of unprofitable thought, which would indeed be the very reverse of my intention. It is simply this, that if ever thou art again plunged into what thou hast well called “the depths of our existence,” or shouldst behold another there, thou mayst remember for thy encouragement, having once known a man who pretending to no more, yet in spite of ignorance or ridicule, laying claim to common rationality, confessing himself unable fully to describe the depths of those spiritual scenes through which in the course of his pilgrimage he has passed, leaves yet behind him certain traces or footsteps by which the future traveller may discern that he once was there.

No. 93. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1823, 4 *mo.* 21.—In the course of the last month I went with my daughters into Yorkshire. Leaving them at Selby, I took a ride alone into Holderness to see those who remained of my mother's relations, as well as a few of the surviving friends of my youth, in whose society, when between the age of boy and man, I was not less informed, for they were my seniors, than delighted. Of the latter I found three retired from business, making one little family : a man and wife whose united ages make upwards of 150 years, and a sister of the latter, who I believe is more than 70. They all appeared in full possession of their faculties, which I think are rather of a superior order, and the married couple retaining so much bodily strength as yet to ride double-horsed twelve miles to their monthly meeting, which I believe has been their practice for more than half a century. As we meet very seldom, this interview, though short, was reciprocally comfortable, whilst standing like the remnant of a broken regiment on a field whereon many of our former companions had fallen around us. The scene thus presented was solemn, though not terrific ; and just before quitting it my intellectual feelings so much corresponded with the state of the elements, which from stormy had become calm, that, as in passing the voyage of life I not unfrequently am, I was reminded of Addison's beautiful hymn beginning "How are thy servants blessed, O Lord !" At this time the lines which impressed me as the most descriptive of the mental circumstances of myself and friends were these :—

“The storm was laid, the winds retired,
 Obedient to thy will;
 The sea that roared at thy command,
 At thy command was still.”

No. 94. To J. J. GURNEY.

1823, 7 *mo.* 21.—That life is full of vicissitude, is an observation almost too trite to be worth making, yet old as the remark is, the experience on which it is founded is new every day. Thus thy infirm friend, who probably appeared quite in health when we lately met, has since his return home been visited with a very sharp fit of those pains in the head which on taking cold frequently fix and centre there, making an already weak part still weaker. But be it so : I will not repine, hoping that through mercy,—for all is of mercy,—I have been enabled to bear not only the chastisement itself, but the bleeding, blistering, &c. consequent thereon, tolerably. Nor would this be worth recording, but as the means of passing a few recovering moments in pleasant intercourse with thee, and as an illustration of the subject on which I stumbled at setting out.

Our being together at Lynn was truly cordial to me, and fulfilled all that I had anticipated from it, in renewing and cementing our union. On mature reflection, no less than in our evening walk on the quay, I consider the day we passed there, as being on the whole a day of favour, or according to my text in our conversation, “as a day which the Lord had made,” and in which therefore we might humbly rejoice. There appear to be now and then, as I doubt not thou hast observed, seasons which are

more than ordinarily consecrated and sanctified. And yet,—for such is the imperfection of man, and of all around him, and such the nature of that earthen vessel in which this most precious treasure is deposited,—I scarcely ever find a joy, or even an excellence, which by passing through a medium does not receive some degree of alloy. Perhaps this is unavoidable, perhaps it is even good for us in our present state, as its uniform effect on my own mind is mortification for one thing; and sometimes I hope humility without dismay for another, and I never find a safer resting-place.

These lines, which are a little varied from the original, as better suiting my purpose, were applied very impressively to my own case in a state of nature, as I was walking alone to our small meeting, I think so lately as fourth-day last :—

“Legion was my name by nature,
Satan raged within my breast;
Never was more vile a creature,
Never creature more distressed.”

22nd.—Let us now reverse the medal, where perhaps to our equal surprise we shall find a presentation not only less appalling, but even shining with the glory of God, and yet little less humiliating to the creature. For although it be indeed true that the suddenness of my conversion (on the highway too) and the display of power attending it, may bear some resemblance to that of the apostle Paul, yet here the simile entirely fails, and all further comparison, from that hour to the present, fills me with a tender but not painful confusion. Not painful, because in this crisis, *love* with its softest touches interposes for my

relief, and *mercy* in her gentlest whispers forbids me to despair. All hail, the glorious day! nearer I trust than when I first believed, and as I sometimes fain would hope, not now very far off, when no longer impeded by obscurity or interruption, I shall extol the Fountain of these ineffable attributes with unceasing Hallelujahs.

I find a spring of comfort and congratulation arise in my heart towards those who of latter years have attached themselves more closely and decidedly to the principles and practices of Friends; and in this view — and — have a place in that secret and sacred recess of my heart, from which I think everything gross and selfish is the most excluded. Here it is that I love them, not so much for my own sake or for theirs exclusively, as for the Lord's sake, and for the sake of his blessed truth, and especially for the sake of that little church, which (however despised, overlooked, or misunderstood,) is to those who have been rightly initiated within its walls, and who abide upon its immovable foundations, a quiet refuge and a peaceful sanctuary. For thus, without invidious comparison, I must be allowed to believe of it, and thus perhaps I may be allowed to persuade others to believe, in this inviting language, nearly that of an apostle, "Come, and have fellowship with us, for truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ:" but not exclusively your privilege, some might object: I do not say this, but this I am bold to avow in the face of the whole world, (and with thee for my Aaron need I fear contradiction?) that under the fastidious nickname by which we are designated, after some examination and much reluctance to bearing its crosses, there still appears to me to be comprised and concealed, even under this very reproach,

the most simple, unsophisticated and essential form of Christian profession.

Whilst no man perhaps thinks less than I do of the boast of heraldry and the pomp of power, whilst no man believes more fully than I do that the universal Parent made of one blood all the families of the earth, and therefore in his sight, the soul of the master and the soul of the servant are alike inestimably precious; yet this persuasion does not in the least interfere with my further belief, that it has pleased the same Almighty Creator and Governor of the world to appoint various classes and conditions of men in society, both civil and religious, and that it is also his will that not only these different classes, but each individual in every class, should contribute to the good of the whole according to the talents bestowed upon him and his opportunities for exercising them.

How much, since we parted, I have been comforted and strengthened by recurring to the passage which came so much before thee in our precious evening meeting at Lynn, "My soul, wait thou *only* upon God, for my expectation is from Him." So true it is that our minds want stirring up by way of remembrance, even of things whereof it might be supposed that we not only knew them before, but were fully established in them.

On casting an eye over my performance I perceive that a trembling hand and a faltering mind, sometimes occasioned by my subject, and sometimes by fatigue and weakness, have produced both blots and blunders. Excuse these, and excuse still more important imbecilities and imperfections of thy friend.

No. 95: To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1823, 7 mo. 31.— My desire towards such of my junior friends as may be similarly circumstanced, both in temporals and spirituals, with this dear young man, is to encourage without flattering, and to warn without wounding them. Yet such is the frailty of human temperament, if I shall not weary thee with a theme to which I am almost perpetually recurring, and which indeed appears to me to be inexhaustible, that when the views of man are most correct, and his object is in sight, his arm is still weak and deviating, so that in executing the best intentions, or even commands, his arrow is apt to fly on this side or that, and sometimes beyond the mark. Hence what need of his own watchful care and skill, and how much greater necessity of something above it,—of that preserving help which can *only* keep him from falling! The last is a point which, however unworthily I may treat it, I am particularly desirous of impressing in the deepest manner upon my friends and fellow-mortals of all classes, whatever their distinctions, denominations, or attainments may be.

I quite unite in thy sentiment of judging even our own selves, believing that in this way much time and strength may be spent to little purpose; and the simple yet solemn consideration, that the thoughts of Him to whom judgment no less than mercy belongeth are higher than our thoughts, and his ways higher than our ways, tends more than anything, short of his own sensible presence in the temple of my heart, to silence the vain cogitations and calm the anxieties which are so apt to intrude, and even

to reign there. This is not judging at random, it is mere statement of fact ; a fact on which may we not devoutly conclude with the apostle, that thanks are indeed due to Him who giveth us the victory.

No. 96. To H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1823, 11 *mo.* 20.—Though our Heavenly Father is merciful, and our friends may, as mine are, be kind, yet perhaps few of us are wholly exempt from a painful and a solitary hour. Instance those nocturnal vigils, wherein the body is too weary or too suffering to sleep, and the mind, still more restless, is too anxious for repose, and instead of this, though perhaps not very wisely, traverses sea and land as it were in quest of new and increased disquietude, until at length, somewhat like the patriarch's dove, weary with these unprofitable wanderings, we are driven back again to the ark, or in language more befitting Christian pilgrims, are compelled to feel after that effective Word, which, to the turbulence of our spirits no less than to the fury of the elements, can, and *only can*, say, "Peace, be still." This sentiment is I believe consistent both with Scripture and experience ; and to the same purport sweetly and I think truly has sung a Christian poet, who appears to have been deeply versed in our subject ; let us hear him :—

"Some dream that they can silence when they will
The storm of passion, and say, Peace, be still ;
But thus far, and no further, when addressed
To the wild wave, or wilder human breast,
Implies authority, that never can,
That never ought to be, the lot of man."

I have within these few months been bereaved by death of a beloved niece, wife to Samuel Sims of Stockport, who for several years previous to her marriage was my companion and housekeeper, much to our mutual comfort and satisfaction. This dear young woman, always amiable and serious, had I believe for a considerable time been increasingly solicitous for her eternal well-being; and though her path was a very retired one, her end seems to have been crowned with peace. Nay, so far as we dim-sighted mortals can judge from appearances, seen as we behold them through a glass darkly, it was more; for I am informed by a relation who attended her through her illness, that as her earthly part declined, her prospects into another and a better world seemed to expand and to brighten; so much so as to induce a hope, and the hope has both consoled and encouraged me, that one who, in order no doubt to her purification, had passed through many and deep baptisms, was finally admitted into ineffable beatitude, as by the portals of a triumphant glory. Does such a hope in such a case as this, for afflictions are apt to carry us too far, exceed in thy judgment the tenor of that language which has been precious to many a drooping mind, held out to us by the dear Redeemer himself in the beginning of the fifth chapter of Matthew, wherein I seem to see the outlines of my dear niece's character exactly portrayed?—she was a mourner, she was meek, she was merciful—and she is gone.

After thus devoting a solitary hour, as a free-will offering to my valued friend, I do not know that I can do better than conclude under the feeling of solemnity which the last words in the last sentence have brought over my mind.

No. 97. To H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1824, 1 *mo.* 3.—As to thy question how far mental or even personal cultivation may minister to pride or humility, the ground may not be quite clear; and yet if we can admit, as I think I can, that when the mind is healthy and well-regulated the person will mostly be sufficiently attended to, as an effect from its cause, perhaps we may safely conclude the most improved state of all our faculties to be favourable as handmaids, but as handmaids only, to religion and virtue. And that in this capacity of subjection to the Christian cross they are also the ornament and the innocent delight of civil society, enabling their favoured possessor to strew more flowers and scatter greater benefits, amongst his fellow-travellers in their journey through the intricate and sometimes discouraging paths of time.

But here, consistently with our acknowledged love of order, let us preserve the needful and obvious distinction, between what really improves and that which only adorns, or between wise and judicious instruction and mere worldly accomplishment; as under the latter designation I am inclined to believe, amongst the other hurtful things, may be recognised the deepest humiliation of the understanding and the greatest corruption of the heart.

It has long been a decided sentiment with me, that all the advantages a man possesses, whether natural or acquired, enable him to be either a better or a worse man, according as he lends himself to the service of the best or the worst of masters; that is to say, he will be either better or worse than other men, in proportion to the means he possesses

of being so, and as his *will* is inclined in the application of them. Thus the very same means which by the renewed mind are made powerful auxiliaries in the service of religion, are by the lawless and disobedient turned into equally powerful aids in the planning and execution of every kind of wickedness. Hence the scholar under the influence of divine grace will generally be found to possess some advantages in the present life over the more simple and unlettered Christian; whilst, on the other hand, a learned sophist is the most dangerous of all sophists, and a wealthy and powerful, the most distinguished of all tyrants; as a knowing and strong, will always excel the weak and less practised robber.

I am aware that such cases as thou hast adduced of our dear and dignified friend —, appear to form particular exceptions to that part of my theory which respects good men; yet I think they do not amount to a general objection, for even he might have written a letter with less pain to himself, and perhaps with better purpose to his friends, had he been more liberally educated; whilst it must be acknowledged that the manner in which this deficiency was supplied, both in meetings and in the social circle, was an astonishing instance of the effect of Divine influence upon a comparatively untutored mind. And what does this prove? That the natural and legitimate object and purpose of this influence is at once to rectify and refine the understanding, to purify and new create the heart; and thus operating, to make both the mind and the person not only less repulsive but very agreeable. How sweet may we now and then observe the cast of that index, the countenance, to be even in individuals labouring under every disadvantage, but that of im-

piety. I have beheld this high order of beauty in the deformed, the aged, and the poor.

Against the pride that "would be angel" it is doubtless proper to guard, but this appears to consist in a curious, aspiring, and too inquisitive disposition; a philosophy falsely so called, that would be wise above that which is either written or revealed, which is more allied to folly than to wisdom, and just the reverse of cultivation and improvement. I do not think this need be any bar to the education of dear children according to the best understanding and abilities of their parents, and with some view perhaps to the sphere of life in which they may have to move.

After all, the longer I live the more I am persuaded by observation and experience, that in all our concerns, and especially that of bringing up our families, unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; and unless He keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. The most anxious and assiduous parents can never make their offspring what they would have them to be, without a blessing upon their endeavours, and the co-operation of the children with both. Parents or guardians, therefore, seem to me to make but one of three parties; but they are a party, and their office is important, especially in its earliest exercise. Let them then not neglect it, as in this case, whatever else may be the issue, they may expect peace in the retrospect of having endeavoured to do their duty; yea, they may derive encouragement from the hope that their counsels, like bread cast on the waters, may be found after many days; and that their prayers, their labour, and travail may be answered, even after they themselves are numbered with the silent dead.

Whilst I contemplate mental cultivation as holding a distinguished and essential part in raising our species from a savage to a civilized condition, I consider religion, the Christian religion, as that which, after education has done its best, can furnish, and only can furnish, the perfect model of accomplished man; and this it effects by producing in the willing and obedient mind what the apostle Paul has appropriately called the fruits of the Spirit; whilst on the reverse of the medal he has given us, as the fruits of the flesh, all that is affecting and deplorable in the picture of unchanged, and may we not add of unrefined nature, groaning under its terrible and unrelenting task-master—the Pharaoh of the soul.

No. 98. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1824, 1 *mo.* 17.—Thy saying, that in spirituals, thankfulness thou hopest prevails, whilst of fruitfulness thou canst say little, but art still desiring to be content, suits me quite well. I too am I hope thankful, not for having performed great or numerous works, I am sure, neither for any redundant sense of the best feelings, but rather that my life, both natural and spiritual, has hitherto been preserved from the power of a cruel and insidious enemy, who on the best authority is described as “going about continually, seeking whom he may devour;” and of whom we probably have each of us known enough to be able, from experience, to say with the apostle, we are not ignorant of his devices.

I have often thought of poor Baruch, scribe to the prophet Jeremiah, the times in which he lived, and his fears excited thereby. This recollection has sometimes, when

under discouragement, proved a stay and support to my mind, and has led me, instead of seeking great things of any kind for myself, to endeavour after an increase of patience in tribulation, if happily by such an acquiescence in griefs I cannot cure, I may, as was promised to that good man, have my life given me for a prey, in all places wherein it may appear my duty to stay or to go. Possibly thou mayst at times have known something like this : if not, do not hastily charge me with murmuring or complaining, which is so far from my desire that I had much rather assume continually, both in converse and in writing, that innocently cheerful air which some say religion should perpetually inspire ; but theory and fact will, in defiance of our best arrangements, sometimes disagree ; and were there nothing else, age I believe begins to give me “ its own complexion,” so that I must not only feel as I can, but appear as I can, which I am often jealous is not with all the contentment and gratitude becoming a professed admirer of the apostolic injunction, to “ rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks.”

19th.—My youngest son, my two daughters, and myself, who now form my family, are at present in the enjoyment of usual health. We reside in the same house where I was born, which by a little retouching we have endeavoured to make a kind of comfortable cottage, and I believe I may say we have succeeded to our general content. This is pleasant, as the taste of young and elderly folks often differs so much. By means of a pretty large bow-window, which being the half of a hexagon admits views to the E.N.E. and S.E., we have obtained a sufficiently light and commodious sitting-room, which is important to me for reading, and taking exercise when I cannot

conveniently take it abroad. We pass our long evenings partly with books. P. reads, his sisters work, and criticise the recent schoolboy, whilst I sit in my arm-chair as grand umpire, or referee in doubtful or difficult cases.

If thou canst bear with me in my *self-criticism* I may add I have sometimes found a sweet satisfaction in allowing myself the time, and in submitting to the humiliation of exchanging a strong impression, which has first presented itself, for one of a gentler tone; for though we may feel acutely, or think we see clearly, it does not therefore follow that we should express ourselves either as forcibly, or to the utmost extent our subject would bear. It perhaps is safer to have something in reserve, should we be pressed, or for our hearers or readers to supply; and I believe that in a general way we obtain quite as much credit for our assertions, and find our way as easily into the heart by moderate, I do not mean cold and indifferent, language, as by that which is more assuming and vehement.

No. 99. TO SARAH SQUIRE.

1824, 3 mo. 24.—In extreme trial of our faith and patience, what shall we say? what shall we do? Can we do better than bring our joys and our griefs, our hopes and our sorrows, our crosses and our crowns, and let us not forget to add, our sins and infirmities, and thus weary and heavily laden, cast our burthen at the sacred footstool of the Most High, attended, should strength be afforded, with this brief, yet pathetic intercession, “Lord, have mercy, for thy dear Son’s sake, upon a poor and most unworthy creature, who finds all other help, and all his own endeavours, without thy

blessing especially superadded, to be altogether unavailing."

To act thus I think we are encouraged by the precepts of our dear Redeemer, by the general tenour of Scripture, by our former experience, and by the advice and exhortations of a cloud of witnesses, both among the living and the dead. Of the latter I think few are so distinguished by beauty, excellence, and instruction as the letters of our late friend in religious profession, John Thorp. They indeed seem peculiarly adapted to the present day of perplexity and of treading down; for such, however it may be as to the general state of society, it certainly is in the painful experience of many individuals, so that whether we look on the right hand or the left, before or behind us, we find ourselves surrounded by companions in tribulation. Oh! that all who are thus afflicted may prove companions also in that faith and patience, which shall ultimately have the victory, and obtain the crown immortal as their reward!

No. 100. To J. J. GURNEY.

1824, 3 mo. 26.—I am ready to conclude, that there never was in any human breast a more settled contempt and aversion than in mine, to those peculiarities of our religious profession which I once chose to denominate (in what spirit I leave thee to judge) the badges of Quakerism; so much for education without grace. Whereas, now I am ready to think that few, if any, rejoice more sincerely than I do, to see any of my friends faithful, not superstitious, in the observance even of the minor points of our law; seeing that the least of them have their relations, and form links in the chain. And I am further willing to

take a little credit for at least the belief that no one feels, according to his capacity of feeling, a more tender sympathy for those who are thus exercised under self-denial and the daily cross, from the remembrance of conflicts which I have endured, surely never to be forgotten, on this deeply interesting subject.

No. 101. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

1824, 5 mo. 7.—Whilst I hope I am not wanting in a general love of mankind, or of charity towards the members of other religious communities, I find that the talent (for I scarcely dare speak in the plural) committed to my trust, if I rightly apprehend it, confines my attention very much within the limits of our own borders. Here indeed I am well aware my obvious labours have been very far from extensive ;—not so I trust my inward exercise,—for since being awakened to a sense of the importance of my own salvation, identifying myself with a people to whose principles I am not more by education than by judgment attached, my spiritual strength and my mental solicitude have been very much absorbed in feelings, perhaps not wholly dissimilar to those from whence proceeded the plaintive cry of old, “ Spare thy people, O Lord ! and give not thy heritage to reproach : ” indeed I have been almost exclusively occupied in this secret path, as whatever may be my inclination, I find little opportunity for much personal attention to any of the numerous good things that are now going forward, having for their laudable object the improvement of the world, and that upon an extensive scale.

For when I would willingly unite in any of these public engagements, and could desire to rejoice in the reports,

which, somewhat like “songs from the uttermost parts of the earth,” I hear of their success, my thoughts are almost instantly called home to the scattered remnant of my own society, into which again merging, the language of Woe is me ! my leanness ! my leanness ! frequently and spontaneously arises.

I should be sorry to entertain, and still more sorry to propagate, too discouraging a view of things ; and though that which I am now taking is not at my own command, and is one of which I cannot entirely divest myself, yet I am quite willing to hope it may be of more local than universal application.

Our dear friend George Withy, however, who was here last summer, had a little to counteract this fear, by saying in a very small gathering, at which I was present, that he seldom sat down with friends so few in number but that he found somewhat worth preserving. These expressions were encouraging to me at the time, and are still precious in my remembrance, as I neither expect a higher station, nor desire a better reward than that of those who mourn in Zion. How full of consolation to the respective classes to which they are particularly addressed, are the beatitudes of the dear Redeemer ! May we aspire after no greater commendation, benefit, or dignity, than to be found among the favoured subjects of them, even at the price proposed, which I think we may in one word denominate self-renunciation.

No. 102. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1824, 9 mo. 29.—I notice the expression of thy desire that our young friends might be able to see their Creator

in every part of his visible works. I think this would be good both for youth and age ; and I therefore love to contemplate creation, not only in its parts, but in its origin, as described with dignified simplicity, some say with equally sound philosophy, in the first chapter of Genesis. Indeed there is nothing that stumbles or offends even my reason in supposing that a Being, infinitely wise, good, and powerful, should delight in the communication of existence, life, order, beauty, and happiness, with a view to his own glory in the perfection of his intelligent creature, man ; for though this may not be the whole, I think it will be generally allowed to form a material part of the vast, the incomprehensible design.

I therefore sometimes delight, with such limited means as I possess, to trace creation to its source, which I would call a simple act of free and benevolent volition in its Author, who, by a fiat thus begotten, "called for things that were not," and they instantly "were;" so that, according to the apostle, "things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Is it not, my friend, interesting thus to go back even to the formation of matter itself ; but is it not surpassing wonder to consider the infinitely various modifications of this simple material, dust, as exhibited to us by our senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling ? In this way I think, whilst concealing Himself behind the veil of his own works from mortal vision, may be clearly seen by the eye of faith, an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Deity, by whom we are most intimately surrounded, and in whom we literally live, and move, and have our being, a God over all, in all, and through all, holy and blessed and reverend is his name ; and *that* before time was, whilst it continues, and when it shall be no longer.

No. 103. To J. J. GURNEY.

Spalding, 1824, 10 mo. 14.—I want to tell thee how frequently and fervently those desires of which I gave thee but an imperfect idea at Fulbeck, continue to ascend to the Father of mercies and God of all comfort for thy welfare every way,—that in heights and in depths, in prosperity and adversity, in health and in sickness, in weakness and in strength, amidst the smiles of thy friends or the frowns of those who may not wish thee so well, He, the universal Parent, may preserve, defend, and spare thee, even as a man spareth his own son who serveth him.

But whilst I am thus concerned to console and strengthen, I would also drop this general word of exhortation,—that seeing it is only by grace that we any of us are what we are, we must therefore be ever careful to render the undivided honour of any good work that may be wrought by, or through us, to the Author of it. And if ever the palm of victory, or the meed of praise should, with better intention than judgment, be presented to us by our frail fellow-mortals, who are sometimes found to be feeble as frail, let us on these occasions be careful to cast every crown, attainment, or possession upon the altar of sacrifice, as a whole and entire burnt-offering, that there, being tried by fire, and purged from dross and defilement, they may not only ascend with acceptance in a cloud of sweet incense before the throne of the Most High, but may procure for the prostrate suppliant a return, not of the turbulent emotions of an unsanctified and selfish pleasure, but of those holier feelings of quietness and assurance, which are at once the evidence and the foretaste of a future inheritance, incorruptible and that fadeth not away,—reserved in hea-

ven for those who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality;—but let us remember, that the glory and honour here intended are to come hereafter, and must be sought for by present self-renunciation, and by ascribing every good and perfect gift, as well as the fruits of it, to God alone.

At Broughton meeting on first-day I was reminded of those assemblies formerly whereof it was said, that the power of the Lord was present to heal the gathered people. I thought I clearly perceived that there was yet balm in Gilead, that there was yet a physician there; and under these impressions, in my brief way, I had to invite the sick, the maimed, the halt, and the blind to come and be cured of their respective maladies.

No. 104. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1824, 10 mo. 27.—In a select opportunity, a little before we parted from thy nephew, I found myself unexpectedly arrested, somewhat as thou describest thyself, in an interview with William Allen, soon after the death of his lovely, beloved, and only child. I was indeed a good deal broken; a thing with me of not very frequent occurrence but which I never regret;—because the heart of man, I will not say mine exclusively, knowing thou dost not like much speaking of ourselves, even on the subject of humiliation, and I really cannot defend it;—I therefore content myself with *querying* if, in despite of the melting of fire, the stroke of the hammer, or the hewing of the sword, the human heart has not still a tendency to petrification—a sort of gravitating principle towards that rock of adamant, whence it may again and again have been detached by one

or all the powerful operations alluded to? May it not then be necessary that these be occasionally repeated, lest we should unhappily return to our original cold, hard, and insensible state, "an evil heart of unbelief"?

We, elders, may apprehend there is cause for gratitude, when these breakings in upon us happen either in our private retirements or in the presence of few and chosen witnesses, that the dear children and little ones be neither offended nor discouraged; but by seeing our abasement as respects ourselves, I think we may be thankful for these as among the appointed means, which, in the ordering of Providence, are dispensed for our furtherance in the great work of sanctification and redemption.

No. 105. TO SARAH SQUIRE.

1824, 10 mo. 28.—Under a renewed and lively sense of the many difficulties and dangers attendant on our pilgrimage through this world, and the certainty, if left to ourselves, of our falling by some of them, or by the joint pressure of them all, which at seasons, like a flood, threatens to overwhelm us;—under an exercise thus produced on my own account, for I also am still a son of tribulation, I have been afresh led to crave of the "Father of mercies, and God of all comfort," that He would be graciously pleased to grant preservation, not only to myself, but to thee, and to all those of his children and servants, who, notwithstanding their unworthiness, are yet of his family, and it may be for the trial of their faith and patience, are with us still deeply afflicted. I have begged that in an especial manner He would send help from his sanctuary, and strengthen these out of Zion, in those cases of extremity, when nothing

less than his appearing, though in his own way and time, on their behalf, can avail them anything, being brought to an utter despair of their own efforts, and in the very depths of self-abasement and humiliation prepared to adopt the language of the Psalmist, "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; unless the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

In thus pouring forth my petitions to the Preserver of men, and commending myself and my dear friends to his holy care and protection, I have found some relief by the renewal of a hope that, after all He has done for some of us, He will not now suffer us to perish; but though He may even prove us as He proved his faithful Abraham, or try us as He tried his afflicted servant, whose pathetic query thou hast been ready to adopt, "Why died I not?" yet it is not his intention, nor consistent with his promises, finally to forsake us:—for, said the apostle James, in direct allusion to the diversified experience of this very man, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord: that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

I have also been renewedly confirmed and comforted by reading 2 Cor. iv., from which, and from an attentive perusal of the whole of that Epistle, we may see how marvellous were the dealings of the Most High in the sufferings, exercises, abasements, and deliverances of his most tried, yet most favoured children, the early converts to Christianity.

Thou and I have communed on these subjects heretofore, but as they still seem deeply to concern us, we may revive them again with the view, the allowable view I trust, of strengthening and building each other up in "our most

holy faith," the trials of which He, who doubtless for some good end permits them,—He, and He only knoweth the number, the nature, and the depth. But what a consolation that we have an Advocate with the Father, who seeth us altogether as we are, who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and having been tempted like unto us, knows how to succour us in all our temptations !

No. 106. To J. AND H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1824, 11 *mo.* 25.—I lately passed a day at Lynn Monthly Meeting with your father and mother, J. and J. G., very satisfactorily to myself. On a retrospect of this sweet interview, I have been ready thus to soliloquize. O religion, amidst all thy charms, thy benefits, and thy blessings, how inestimable are thy friendships ! If our poor, fallen, and degraded nature has any feelings better than the rest, they must surely be the social, but how are these exalted and refined by the influence of Christian principles !

No. 107. To J. J. GURNEY.

1824, 12 *mo.* 3.—I seldom contemplate the life and writings of the apostle Paul but with a mixture of wonder, sympathy, and delight, and even in my present views of them am ready to exclaim, O Christianity, how do thy realities exceed the very fictions of romance ! Thou art indeed the potent alchymist, who changest human rockwork into man ; nor dost thou stop here, but after having thus converted him, by a further transmutation, peculiarly thy own, thou refinest him as silver is refined, and

triest him as gold is tried, until, as the operations of thy furnace are submitted to, he at length cometh forth more pure than fine gold, yea, than the golden wedge of Ophir.

Having mentioned prayer, though there is not among my religious acquaintance an individual to whom I should consider the recommendation of this duty more superfluous; yet on the very delicate subject thou hast hinted at, a renewal of thy domestic comfort, a thing which in the Lord's way and time I think is to be devoutly wished;—on this important question I was about to say, that if by any means a more than ordinary depth and fervency in prayer can be come at, it is surely wanted here. For it has seemed to me that it is not so difficult even *rightly* to petition for another or for the whole world as for ourselves. Self-love in one shape or other, and I have thought in no case more likely than the present, is so apt to bewilder us, and to insinuate itself into the most secret recesses, or if we may use the expression, into the very sanctuary of our hearts; so that, especially when looking with allowable desire towards the highest favours a gracious Providence bestows, it may be needful for us in the first place to ask for wisdom, understanding, and self-renunciation, in order that we may prefer our petitions for the things we think we stand in need of with proper subserviency to the Divine will.

I stopped over first-day at Downham to my satisfaction, though the family in which I passed most of my time was in a state of suspense, I might almost say of mourning. Poor J. D. appeared to me to be quite in the latter stage of life, and I find by a letter from his sister H. C. that his weakness has increased since I was there. To behold a fine young man, in defiance of human efforts, encircled

by those to whom I find he has greatly endeared himself, thus gradually declining was truly affecting ; and I never remember being more struck with the force of those Scriptural figures which compare frail humanity to withering grass, fading flowers, or a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away, &c. O Time ! if thou wert our all, if our hopes and our prospects ended with thee, then might the stoutest heart and the loftiest spirit sink into utter dismay. But thanks be to God ! this is not our unhappy case ; a better inheritance, a more enduring substance, a house not made with hands, a city which hath foundations ; in a word, a mansion in the heavens is in reserve for all those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality.

No. 108. TO SARAH A. HARRIS.

1824, 12 *mo.* 6.—How refined are the enjoyments and how extensive are the resources of the mind ! Over these time and place, with all their attendant vicissitudes, seem to have comparatively but little power. This observation holds, I think, in a very considerable degree throughout all that really deserves the name of friendship ; whilst, if I am not mistaken, it is found to be true in a still larger sense in the important concerns of religion ; from whose Sun of righteousness, the beams of light ineffable are found to pervade alike the palace and the prison ; from whose fountain of living waters refreshment extends to every heart prepared to receive them, whether the subject be an inhabitant of the lone land, as thy friend, or of the city full, whether

he be cast on the wild or the ocean, or enjoying the highest privilege of man, he be found in the solemn assembly of the Lord's visibly gathered people.

I am aware that I am addressing one but lately entered on that stage of life which is generally thought to promise the most of human happiness. But I never can think that this happiness is lessened by a true estimate of its nature, which appears to me to be at once dependent and contingent. If it be asked upon what? My reply is, upon the will and wisdom of that Power which formed and rules the world, under whose protection and authority only, though these are often inscrutably administered, is there to be found either peace or security, the foundation of happiness, for any of us.

No. 109. To J. AND H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1824, 12 *mo.* 13.—I can scarcely forbear mentioning that dear H.'s expressions of thanksgiving on the death of your child, has reminded me forcibly of the apostolic exhortation, "Rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks." It has reminded me also of my own experience under a similar trial, when after watching for several days the illness of my oldest daughter, who nearly fourteen years ago died at Selby, of water in the head, at the age of fifteen, the disorder at length reached a crisis, wherein it was thought best for me to leave the sick-room: I did so, but could not be easy without returning. This procured for me an intelligent and seraphic smile, for she was speechless, observed only by myself; but which I would not have missed for any consideration in my power. I then again

and finally left her; and in a few minutes afterwards being informed that she had ceased to breathe, was suddenly enabled alone, and amidst a flood of nature's tears, to utter this short ejaculation, "I thank Thee, Father."

I cannot tell what those who consider reason as the only guide and chief good of man would make of such conduct as this. I think it was not an effect of leaning to my own understanding; and certainly not to my own inclination; for I would willingly have kept my child, upon whom, after the decease of her mother, I had placed much expectation and hope, which she seemed likely to realise. To what then must we ascribe this? Perhaps to the influence of that Spirit which helpeth our infirmities; and which, surmounting nature, teaches us not only to pray, but to praise and return thanks aright. What indeed short of this gentle yet powerful agency, can bring such poor creatures as we are to adopt in sincerity and truth this pious sentiment of Young, "For all we bless Thee, most for the severe"?

No. 110. TO SARAH SQUIRE.

1825, 1 *mo.* 15.—How desirable it is that under any ministry, "the heart of the righteous should not be made sad, whom the Lord would not make sad," nor "the hands of the disobedient strengthened by promising him life!" And in order that this may not take place, it does seem very needful, that the hearer, no less than the preacher, keep close to the heavenly gift or guide, that so the word delivered may not only be dispensed aright, but received aright, and by those only to whom it belongs. For I believe it is by the application of the Spirit bearing witness

with our spirit, that either reading or ministry is made useful to us, whether it be in the way of reproof, instruction, or comfort. It is then very needful for us to guard against judging ourselves, favourably or unfavourably, because here the busy enemy is almost sure to insinuate himself into our reasonings, and either lift us up, cast us down, or grievously perplex and distract us, as our hopes, our fears, or our imaginations may afford him the opportunity.

I am indeed thankful when permitted to partake of "the crumbs;" and this was so much the case on the morning I received thy letter, that the whole contents of my heart seemed to be compressed into these short, but deeply-felt ejaculations, Lord, save me! save my dear children! save thy afflicted ones, wherever they are! I beseech Thee!

No. 111. To H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1825, 3 mo. 18.—When by a course of exercise neither the most shallow nor gratifying, I am introduced into humiliation, my thoughts sometimes revert to thee as to one with whom I may commune *sweetly*, (for even bitter things are sweet in connexion with Jesus,) yet *sadly*, first, on the sorrows and sufferings of the dear Redeemer; next, on our own, and then perhaps on those of our sincere, yet unworthy fellow-travellers heavenward. For without laying claim to pre-eminence in this particular—unworthy in their own sight, I think all must be, when from this lower world they only contemplate as through a distant and obscure vision, that perfection of beauty and of holi-

ness, before the immediate effulgence whereof even angels are said to veil their faces.

We are sometimes told that it is not good to say much of our unworthiness, &c., lest we thereby discourage those who from the infancy of their experience may be compared to children or little ones. Undoubtedly a care is requisite not only on this account, but that we may not get into a superficial habit amounting to little more than the image or affectation of humility; and yet as there are times and seasons for all things, so I believe there are occasions when those who “fear the Lord and think upon his name,” may, as in former times, speak together on any subject connected with their allegiance to Him, their love one towards another, or their mutual edification. And it may possibly come under some of these descriptions to be now and then convinced by a little insight into a companion’s secret path, even should it be a tribulated one, that we are not, as perhaps we had in low seasons imagined, alone, and that nothing has befallen us that is not common to man, or that is not probably at the present moment being fulfilled in others of our brethren and sisters who are in this world.

No. 112. To J. J. GURNEY.

1825, 6 *mo.* 20.—I find the enemy of peace seems yet at work to disquiet and unsettle my mind, both by true and false suggestions. One of the former description which presses me the hardest at present is, the very small part I am taking, or can take, in those distinguished works of religion, justice, and humanity which so strongly mark

the present day ; and that therefore, after all I have seen, heard, or felt, there is considerable danger of my being ultimately classed either with the fearful and unbelieving, or with the slothful servants.

In answer to this, I plead not with my adversary, but at the footstool of mercy, the spiritual impossibility of my going with any prospect of advantage, or indeed without danger, beyond my measure, or out of the line prescribed to me, however limited this may be, as well as the physical difficulty of declining years. Thus impressed, I beg, with humble and earnest solicitude I trust, that although I may not be able to assist Martha in her much-serving, the part of Mary may never be taken from me. Ah ! my dear friend, whatever thou mayst approve or disapprove in me, join me, if thou canst, in desiring that at a season when weary nature sighs for repose, this part, this blessed part may never be taken from me.

No. 113. TO J. AND J. GURNEY.

Selby, 1825, 7 mo. 4.—I may just now be the better qualified to address you in particular with a salutation of love and of peace, from experiencing, after a season of conflicting feelings, a degree of quietness and confidence restored to my often-agitated heart. Ah ! my valued fellow-travellers, how is it that some of us so frequently find occasion to query with ourselves as David did, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul ?” but the why and the wherefore are doubtless wisely hid from us, and it remains for us with the Psalmist to “hope in God, and to let our expectation be only from Him ;” but how difficult sometimes is

this lesson! I am not, however, disposed to complain of this or any other difficulty, but rather to be thankful for the door of hope, which I have once more found as in the valley of Achor, or shall I say, in a state of humiliation and prayer?

I am now seated on the banks of the Ouse, in my son's new establishment, just upon a fine turn of that river. From the windows, though the country is flat, we have some picturesque scenery, composed of both natural and artificial objects. Of the former, green banks, cattle, pine-wood, and water; and amongst the latter, shipping, a good bridge, warehouses, cranes, commerce, the activity of a port, and as a countryman may be allowed to say, "the varied lumber of a town," which may do for a change, but for him it would not do always.

No. 114. To J. AND K. FOSTER.

1825, 7 mo. 11.—It need not surprise us, if a friendship, disinterested as I think ours has been from its commencement, should be rather mellowed than impaired by time; or in other words, if that love which began in natural affinities and associations, should be improved by something better: and that if we are favoured to grow in grace, the operation of this sublime principle will not only add to, but ratify and purify every amiable and good disposition whereof we are capable, of which love to God and love to each other will be acknowledged to stand foremost. And judging by the tenderness with which of later time I often remember you, in connexion with the great uncertainty of our all meeting again in mutability, I have thought it possible that the feelings to which I have

alluded may not only exist, but have an infinite expansion beyond the grave. I am aware, however, that this is among the secret things which it is not given us in our present state to know ; yet the contemplation is so delightful to the Christian, and the hope so prevalent in the breast wherein at seasons hope deigns to make its abode, that it is difficult, and I trust not necessary, to dismiss either one or the other entirely from our minds.

I have mentioned hope, by which I mean the hope which maketh not ashamed, and which rests entirely on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, as an occasional rather than a constant visitant, for such indeed I find it. Yes, my dear friends, to you I am free to confess that there are times when a remembrance of the sins of my youth, a sense of present infirmities, and a feeling of utter unworthiness of Divine regard, so press upon me, that whilst I cannot hope, I feel it to be too awful a thing to despair. Thus circumstanced, I find the only alternative to be, waiting in as much stillness as I can, and watching unto prayer, for the return of that morning light, before which the mists of the night flee away ; and which, as patience has been sufficiently abode in, has never yet, and I trust never will, deceive or disappoint me, though I may sometimes, at least according to my own limited conceptions, have had to wait long.

I express myself on this important subject with the greater freedom, because of the humble spiritual views which I believe you entertain of yourselves,—because of those castings down and disquietings whereof David speaks, and to which the weight of years may make you increasingly subject ; and lastly, because of my own experience in these deep humiliations ;—being at the present

juncture just emerging from one of those darksome plunges to which I have alluded, and from which, had I not been thus favoured a little to ascend, it is not probable you would now have heard from me. As it is, and I hope you will be enabled to rejoice with me, I have been enabled to adopt, as a morning hymn of thanksgiving and praise, much of the beautiful language of the one hundred and third Psalm, which you will find on perusal to be full of consolation and encouragement to the exercised mind.

No. 115. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

Selby, 1825, 8 mo. 16.—How sweet is the balm of friendship ; and what a blessing is a friend ! are expressions which have almost spontaneously arisen, on turning my mind towards one with whom I sometimes divide its comforts, and oftentimes its cares. And though there may be a great deal of selfishness in the apportionment, yet am I not thereby much discouraged ; for being no stoic, and I fear but a very imperfect Christian, I am quite willing to confess myself a poor, selfish creature, standing in need not only of Divine assistance, but of the sympathy and prayers of my fellow-members in the church. But even this view, though it humbles, does not afflict me ; for if we are favoured to reach those happy shores to which we profess to be bound, it shall not matter to how many helps we have been indebted, or how many mortifications we have met with in the course of our voyage. Indeed the very circumstances of Divine strength having been manifested in such utter weakness, and the most perfect attributes being exalted in and over such manifold infirmities,

may possibly in a glorified state compose the ecstatic theme of our loftiest anthems, swell the notes of praise, and lend to our celestial harps their sweetest and their loudest tones.

This is not, I think, a flight of fancy, but an effusion of genuine feeling, produced by the changes in which I have been involved since I last wrote to thee, which was from this house. I was then participating, with much satisfaction, in the happiness of my children. Within about the last three weeks, I have been summoned to attend the funerals of two nieces, their maternal first-cousins.

The first of these affecting cases was of Mary, the wife of Joseph Burt, of Welbourn, who has left an afflicted husband and nine children. In her, nature was exhausted, but she appeared to die in sweet peace; and the prevailing impression on my mind respecting her was, that although a poor, emaciated body was left us for a moment to mourn over, yet her immortal spirit was assuredly ascended to that God, who had in wisdom sent it hither, and in mercy called it home. Her character in life was much retired,—a flower that blushed unseen; but to the very few who had an opportunity of viewing it closely, and who could appreciate hidden worth, it was one of the fairest hue and sweetest fragrance.

The other instance was in Mary, wife of William Massey, jun., of this place, who after a few days of not very confining illness, was suddenly snatched as from the arms of her husband and an infant of about eight months old. She was interred here last first-day, a great concourse of neighbours, by whom she was respected, and many friends from York, &c., attending on the occasion. Among the latter were W. and A. A., and it proved, I thought, a day of

much favour, both immediate and instrumental. I never remember hearing religion placed at once in a more lovely and important point of view. It reminded me of the invitation to "the poor, the maimed, and the blind," which was to compel them to a feast of fat things. Forgetting for the time all obstructions and excuses, I was ready to say in my heart, Surely none can refuse such gracious offers of mercy. But alas! alas! Leviathan is not so tamed, is not so charmed; yet though this may appear to be the case generally, we are not to conclude that our labours in the Gospel are in vain. I think there is much encouragement to believe otherwise from the language of the Most High by his prophet, "My word shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in that whereto I send it."

No. 116. To J. J. GURNEY.

1825, 8 mo. 22.—If thou regard this letter in all its parts, as I think thou must, as a true portrait of a feeble old man, I need not give thee any further account of my present state, than just to say that were it not for grace within and the Scriptures without, I seem as if I must yet sink: but thus supported, what may not even such an one hope! I was last evening much comforted and encouraged by hearing my son read in his family the first six chapters in the second to the Corinthians. What love and sympathy at this distance of time we sometimes feel for eminent Scripture characters! I think mine runs the strongest towards Paul and David, always reserving an unmeasured and indescribable portion for the once-suffering, now glorified Redeemer, to whom with the Father be

all honour, thanksgiving, and praise, in time and in eternity !

No. 117. TO SARAH SQUIRE.

1825, 9 *mo.* 22.—Since I last wrote to thee, indeed for nearly the last twelvemonths, I have had but little entire rest for body or mind, which as I have often been sensible of weariness, may possibly in some degree have weakened both one and the other. But this is a thing of minor consequence ; and I think it a favour to be permitted to descend the hill so gently, and if I may but be further allowed to pass the dark valley at the bottom of it in safety, it will be a still greater mercy.

Of my various excursions within the passing year, none have seemed to require credentials from my friends ; and yet I think I may truly say, they have not been undertaken from mere motives of self-gratification ; and I hope it has been my uniform endeavour to consecrate them in some degree by an attention to the feeling of sympathy or the pointings of duty, whenever I could discern them, and both one and the other were I thought at times vouchsafed to me, especially in the more hidden and private cases of afflicted individuals, of which number, under various circumstances of trial, I found several in the course of my peregrinations, tending to confirm me in a sentiment, the truth of which I might have long since sufficiently known, that life is a pilgrimage, and not a rest. How many are there, up and down, who are daily experiencing the fulfilment of their dear Redeemer's assurance, that in the world they shall have trouble ! May they also witness Him to

overcome the world in them, and for them,—for truly besides Him there is no Saviour.

No. 118. To SARAH SQUIRE.

1825, 10 *mo.* 22.—After endeavouring to do the best we can in providing for, educating, and placing them out, we must leave our children to the Lord and their own conduct ; as after all our labours, and with the Divine blessing upon these labours, they may if they will, as some unhappily do, forsake their own mercies, and pursue a wrong course. Yet this consideration does not supersede the discharge of parental duty ;—but it should, I think, tend to lessen unprofitable solicitude and vain anticipations of things, that may, or may not ever happen ; and whether they do or do not, are quite beyond our control. So that after doing, more than thinking, what we can for our beloved offspring, and as every pious parent is concerned to do, commending them to the care of Israel's unslumbering Shepherd ; there and to their own determinations we must finally leave them. Thou mayst perceive how much stress I lay upon the right exercise of man's free agency ; for though it is true that mercy is infinite, and its offers may be often repeated, yet no man is compelled to accept them : he that will not, shall not inherit the kingdom.

Strong and lively impression is often made by very few words, so that if we know how to extract it, we shall sometimes find the essence of long letters, long discourses, and large volumes is comprised in a very small portion of each. Do not however mistake me, if I can remember or digest but little at a time, others may have stronger powers ; and

as it respects religious communications, one thing is certain, that the attributes of the Most High and the mysteries of his redeeming love are inexhaustible themes.

Having been helped hitherto, let us be thankful for mercies past, and humbly hope for more; rejoicing, if we can, in our present lot, and in everything giving thanks. This may be, and I believe often is, a difficult attainment; yet it is not impossible, through the aid of Him who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities; and for his assistance it is our business to watch and to pray continually. I think I never recollect feeling more truly thankful in the remembrance even of affliction and trials, as means of humbling my proud and corrupt heart, than just when I was about to enter a meeting at Sutton the other day, which finished my little concerns in that neighbourhood, and returned me to Gedney, with a portion of sweet and most unmerited peace. Ah! how unworthy is man! but how inconceivably and eternally worthy is his Creator and his Redeemer of all glory, adoration, and praise!

No. 119. To J. J. GURNEY.

1825, 11 *mo.* 19.—Thou knowest how insulated my situation is as to the outward, and it is often equally so within; so that there are seasons wherein I seem cut off, or shut up from all that lives. Still even in this imprisoned situation, I have looked towards the Lord's holy habitation with desire, and towards his people with love.

Thou hast alluded in one of thy letters to the trials peculiar to Gospel ministers. One thing I find under all, that my attachment to my friends of this class becomes

increasingly strong and tender, and either in kind or degree, very different to what I was accustomed to feel whilst only in the office of an elder. I honour faithful elders, and think they are useful in religious society, in reproof, informing, and perhaps encouraging us; yet there are sympathies towards each other, of which *we* only seem to be capable.

It is sometimes my experience to feel deeply for such of my dear friends in the ministry as may be said to be under their probation; or having passed this stage, are yet under circumstances too nearly approaching those described by the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 9—13. Such individuals I am acquainted with; and I feel desirous not only for them, but for myself and all our fellows, that we may not only be willing, when thereunto called, to enter into these humiliations, but to abide patiently under them for the allotted season: that being thus crucified with Christ—is it not crucifixion?—we may know what it is to rise with Him. I am sometimes even thankful that a part in this ministry, however limited, has been, as I trust, committed to me, that so I might be permitted to partake with those of larger gifts in their tribulations, and not in their tribulations only, but in their consolations also. For although it be indeed true that the former of these do often abound, yet let us not be so ungrateful as to forget that the latter do much more abound, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

No. 120. To J. J. GURNEY.

1825, 12 mo. 12.—The impression—and it is not a superficial one—which I have received from being in-

formed of thy being about an immediate commencement of renewed Gospel engagement is, that thou art going forth, if not literally weeping, at least in a disposition which entitles the obedient and faithful servant to take encouragement from the language of Psalm xxvi. verses 5 and 6 : "I have hated the congregation of evil doers ; and will not sit with the wicked. I will wash mine hands in innocency : so will I compass thine altar, O Lord." Through humble watchfulness, and the mercy of Him who hath called and redeemed us by his own blood, may these sustaining assurances be verified in the experience of my dear friend, who may rest also certain of any remembrances of mine that can possibly avail him.

Dear A. and his near connexions ! We may feel for, yet cannot help them, but by our sympathy and our prayers : such is the lot of humanity :—and "so vain" as I understand thy two emphatic words to mean, is any wish of ours to reverse the irrevocable sentence inscribed upon all terrestrial enjoyments ; or with fallacious hopes to lay the foundations of a continuing city here : so true it is, they build too low, who build beneath the skies. We are also frequently reminded, and is it not a consoling and instructive memento, that

"'Tis immortality—'tis that alone,
Amid life's pains—abasements—emptiness,
The soul can comfort, elevate, and fill."

No. 121. To J. J. GURNEY.

1826, 1 mo. 26.—A token of thy continued remembrance and regard could scarcely have been more welcome than

was the one which I received from thee within the last few days. By the side of those "rivers" where I am often stationed, with my harp on the willows, ready to weep for myself and the little captive church to which I am so closely attached,—here thy letter found me, and having no song of my own, save the hidden and passive one of resignation, I had concluded to beguile my solitude by reading and contemplating the prosaic melody of thy "Essays." Whilst thus employed, Rachel opened the door of my parlour with thy messenger in her hand: could there be a nicer coincidence? perhaps it was useful too, for though my situation was tranquil, yet probably I had been sailing long enough *down* the stream, and it might be time for me to bring to and endeavour to feel for the bottom. Ah! how much oftener than the returning morning have we need, both in auspicious and adverse gales, to cast anchor on the "Rock of Ages!" Canst thou understand a language which half the world would call mysticism and nonsense? I believe thou hast thyself been long enough acquainted with this "foolishness," (for "we see our calling,") to understand it perfectly.

How sweetly, as thy expressions and my own feelings persuade me, do we unite in the love one of another, and of that principle which can make everything but wilful contraries assimilate and harmonize!—I say *wilful*, because though the principle whereof we speak is able to subdue all things unto itself; yet man being a free agent, it does not force him, but finally leaves him to his own destiny. However, therefore, we may lament over the opposers of this Divine grace, or however humble our views may be of its professed advocates, yet surely the thing itself possesses an excellence that would exhaust panegyric and is beyond

all human estimation. So that with much reason indeed did the apostle exclaim, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!" Here I would observe that it was more than a little cheering to me to find that amidst all that surrounds and attends thee, thou wast still so lively in commendation of this true faith or grace wherein we stand, and so warmly attached to that catholic and universal church which is built upon it. My heart responds to thine in the descriptive eulogy of this church as expressed by the sweet singer of Israel, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King:—God is known in her palaces for a refuge," &c.

No. 122. To SARAH SQUIRE.

1826, 1 *mo.* 31.—As the time for the departure of — draws very near, I find myself not easy to let her go without a written message of my love, accompanied by the assurance not only of my continued remembrance, but of my present desires, that the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort may have thee and thine, and me and mine under His holy care and keeping.

Ah! how much do we owe to this Divine Providence which watcheth over us by day and by night, not only feeding and clothing us, not only preserving us from violent and sudden death, and all the greater calamities incident to our present state; but in an invisible and incomprehensible manner surrounding our path and our bed, and ordering minor things for us, beyond all we could ask or think. This is a slight sketch of my present faith, very

hastily expressed ; should it prove like one of those transient interviews which we sometimes compare to iron sharpening iron, my end will be answered.

No. 123. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1826, 3 *mo.* 3.—I believe I just hinted at the satisfaction with which I remembered my visit to Cromer. In this retrospect nothing pleases me more than to view as we saw her, and as thou hast told me is her frequent practice, thy dear companion reading her Bible before breakfast ; or to imagine thee, with a mind perhaps equally meditative, taking at that salubrious hour a walk for the benefit of thy health. Whether I see thee ascending the bare hill, taking thy stand upon the still more exposed cliff to contemplate the wonders of sea and sky ; or returning through groves of thy own planting to thy cottage home, my visionary prospect is generally associated with a portion of verse which I copied more than forty years ago, and which agreeing as I have found it does with experience, pleases and instructs me to the present day. Should these lines, as I think they may, excite corresponding feelings in thy mind, I perhaps shall do something more than blot my paper by transcribing them for thy perusal. After describing beautifully various objects of sight and sound which formed the immediate scene of his musings, the author says,

“ Much on the imperfect state of man I have mused :
How pain o’er half his hours her iron reign
Ruthless extends. How pleasure from the path
Of innocence allures his steps. How hope

Fixes his eye on future joy that flies
 His fond pursuit. How fear his shuddering heart
 Alarms with fancied ill. How doubt and care
 Perplex his thought. How soon the tender rose
 Of beauty fades ; the sturdy oak of strength
 Declines to earth, and over all our pride
 Stern time triumphant stands."—JOHN SCOTT.

I do not know that we set an equal value on this sort of composition, of which when I find it, as I now and then do, at least according to my own views, needlessly disparaged, I venture to avow myself the feeble advocate. I have heard of a grave authority on the other side the water, who perhaps uniting a little of the zeal of an ancient puritan with the taste of a modern backwoodsman, would dispose of poetry at once, by driving it out of existence. Now admitting the abuse of poetry, in common with every other good thing, and excepting the most solemn parts of Scripture, I have never read anything better in prose than in verse, or worse in the last than the first ; I therefore conclude that they have their appropriate situations and respective advantages in the important business of forming character and regulating manners.

Whilst thus speculating I am strongly impressed with the following sentiments of our friend Dr. Hancock, "as well might we suppose a self-moving orb to pass unhurt with a steady course through blazing comets crossing each other's path in endless physical disorder, as that a human being in the present scene of moral darkness and perplexity could direct his own steps aright by the natural powers of his own mind, or apply himself effectually, in such a state of infinite confusion, to the duties for which he was designed,

without providential guidance. How consistent then with true philosophy is the saying that ‘a good man’s steps are ordered of the Lord’ ! How consistent with Christianity, and the general harmony of the Universe” !

We are told that poetry enervates the mind ; by which I understand reduces its natural pride, fierceness, stupidity, and selfishness to a lower standard ; and does not this same human nature want amelioration ? I think it does, seeing that men naturally are so much more disposed to treat their fellows with haughtiness, cruelty, and dissimulation, than with the meekness, gentleness, and integrity recommended by the Gospel. I would therefore that the lion were tamed, the bear softened, the ass stimulated, and the fox taught to be less crafty and more honest ; and I am not convinced by all I have yet heard that my favourite may not be useful as a means, for all is under grace, in thus changing rude and savage nature into civilized man.

Here I would hint at a distinction which appears to me to exist between music and poetry ; that the first seems to be confined to the senses and passions, whilst the latter addresses the understanding too ; the first leaves nothing substantial behind it, the latter, if it be well chosen, much. To give an illustration, if a man can take up our late dear P. G.’s selection of hymns without some improvement both of his head and his heart, I should suspect him to be equally deficient in taste, in judgment, in piety.

No. 124. To H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1826, 3 mo. 6.—Although, as thou hast hinted, “ imagination,” that domestic enemy to our peace, may some-

times needlessly depress us, and even make the salutary corrections of our Heavenly Father more bitter than He intends, yet there is a reality in trouble. Have not I, and, though so much younger, hast not thou known that grief and pain are something else than a dream? Yes, it may not be too much to say that we have been afflicted, bruised, and broken; but as we have also experienced that arm which is omnipotent to save, stretched out for our help, we have thereby tasted the joy of grief, or to use more sacred language, have been comforted in all our tribulations, so that we continue to this day monuments of Divine mercy. The horrible pit has not been suffered to shut its mouth upon us, nor the mire and clay to hold us; but we have been marvellously delivered, and a new song, even the song of praise and thanksgiving, has been on certain memorable occasions raised in our hearts.

Still I will not conceal from thee that thou hast judged right in supposing my spiritual dwelling to be often in "the deeps, where there is not much pleasant bread." Here I frequently go mourning all the day long, because of the oppression of the enemy, who, limited as he is, seems nevertheless to cause much mischief in the earth; and if I were asked who among the sons of men were the objects of my solicitude, I perhaps should say the whole human race—myself, my family, the church, and the world, in each of which I am at times made sensible there is cause for such as are qualified to weep, as between the porch and the altar, and to cry, "Spare thy people, thy unworthy creatures, O Lord!"

Yet, though this is the case, I am not in despair; on the contrary, there are seasons when, for each of the classes just mentioned, I can even rejoice, in hope of the

goodness of Him whose compassions fail not—whose tender mercies are over all his works—who causeth his sun, both material and intellectual, to rise on the evil and on the good, and the showers of nature and of grace to fall on the just and on the unjust; or to attempt in few words what many must fail to set forth, the infinite and incalculable benefits of our gracious Creator: He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. Thus occasionally strengthened, I endeavour to hold on my secret way against the opposition which, though unknown to the world, seems at times to be formidable in its array; and it is with the view of encouraging thee to persevere in thine, that I am thus communicative on subjects in which truly there seems little for nature to glory.

So long as simple preservation is mercifully granted from day to day, we have reasonable ground for hope, and none for utter dismay; but rather, whatever has heretofore, or may still attend us, we have cause to be thankful, that through grace we are what we are, (poor it may be, yet having our lives given us, as it were, for a prey,) members not only of the Lord's outward and animal, but of his rational, and, as we are now and then favoured to feel, of his spiritual creation. Thus circumstanced, if we cannot rejoice, let us be thankful.

Not long since I had an experience somewhat like what has been said of angels' visits, "few and far between"—a song in the night, and, which thou wilt perhaps think rather strange, had for its subject a sweet and unexpected recollection of part of Pope's Universal Prayer:

. "Mean though I am, not wholly so,
Since quickened by thy breath;

O lead me wheresoe'er I go,
Through this day's life or death."

I cannot easily describe how confirming these lines in particular were of the view I have just been taking, of what may not only be our apprehension respecting our own state of mind, but of many other hidden fellow-travellers, who, in the face of much difficulty, it may be, are endeavouring to run the race set before them, and through tribulation and exercise, are striving to enter the kingdom.

With regard to the monied and commercial storm, I can pity those, whether they have been blamable in setting up idols of silver and gold or not, who have been overwhelmed by it; whilst I congratulate, on the other hand, such as, though not exempt from suffering, have been favoured to escape from ruin. This I think becomes one who, like myself, has known many changes, even in the peaceful and necessary business of agriculture, in which, it is true, I have witnessed very prosperous times; but I have also, and more than once, seen those wherein it could afford little pleasure to the farmer either to see his corn grow or his cattle thrive; and I have again lived to a crisis which may bring my children into the same unwelcome situation; for though it has begun higher, it will probably, in its more remote effects, pervade every corner of the land; indeed, considerable change has already taken place in the value, and great stagnation in the sale, at any price, of the produce of the soil. Still, in our recesses, we are free from some things:—I never knew a mob at Gedney; but whilst it has pervaded the city, I have hitherto, in the most difficult times, been able to enjoy the privilege of listening to the song of the black-bird, or the gentle murmurs of the wind in the grove.

7th.—I am inclined to add to what I so diffusely wrote yesterday, a reference to two short portions of the Old Testament Scripture, which in the course of family reading lately arrested my drooping faith, and I think somewhat strengthened it. The passages alluded to may be found at Judges, xiii. 23, and Zephaniah, iii. 12.

No. 125. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1826, 3 mo. 22.—Both the prose and the verse of thy last letter were very acceptable to me. It was also gratifying to find, that under the favourable circumstances of having been thinking of me, *mine* met with a welcome reception, and that thou couldst discern, amidst the various qualities thou hast ascribed to it, friendship to be the principal ingredient. This is certainly what was intended.

In reference to thy query, I think the music of instruments may be detached from poetry, being quite distinct from the harmony, or, if we please, the tune, which perhaps is inseparable from it, and which, under some circumstances, may not only be an agreeable, but a powerful aid to this interesting vehicle of knowledge and of truth.

I think singing, however, as a religious practice, (if this made a part of thy inquiry,) should be sparingly used, and that it should be under an influence not at our command; and therefore, perhaps can seldom, if ever, be safely adopted by the whole of a mixed congregation, composed of every variety of spiritual condition; whilst making melody in our hearts to the Lord, when we feel it arise, or the sacred song by night or by day, when such is given

us, may, I apprehend, be addressed with the spirit and the understanding, and the voice also, to Him who qualifies for the service.

Of merely instrumental music I certainly have a very unfavourable opinion ; much precious time and property, I think, are wasted upon it in modern education ; whilst, as an attendant on worship, my objection to it is quite of a serious kind, as it seems to me to resemble so much those dreams of eating, from whence, when one awakes, his soul has appetite, and to have nothing in it of that process, which, though it originates in tribulation, leads its submissive votary to a hope that maketh not ashamed.

I am not surprised at her parents feeling much in the prospect of their dear —— leaving them. My love to her, and tell her that I wish her as much happiness as she can enjoy, with humble and daily reference to the Author of every blessing, spiritual and temporal. If there is one truth in which I am more confirmed or rejoice more than another, it is in a constantly superintending Providence ; and that nothing deserves the name of happiness, further than as it is held in dependence upon, and with gratitude to Him.

No. 126. TO SARAH SQUIRE.

1826, 4 *mo.* 14.—In the whole course of our acquaintance and correspondence, nothing strikes me so much as the similarity, as I trust we may call it, of our Christian course, especially as regards its vicissitudes. Thy last letter was, if I understand it, strongly marked by a description of much change in mental feeling and spiritual

condition ; and such, indeed, have been my experiences since I last saw thee. I will not enter into a further detail, than just to say, what I believe thou wilt fully understand, that some of them have been new, and almost awful.

Ah ! how gladly would nature escape these trying baptisms ! Sometimes in brighter moments we are apt to conclude that the days of our mourning were ended, and that the bitterness of death is passed ; when, so far from finding our self-love realized, we are again “ plunged into the ditch,” we are again consumed, as by a stroke of the Divine hand. But how mighty, how marvellous, and how merciful is that Power, who, though He sees it expedient thus to try and to prove us, has hitherto wonderfully preserved through it all. We have had, at least I apprehend so, to pass through much of what the apostle describes, 2 Cor. iv. 7—11 ; and yet, though thus dying, behold we live ; and my present faith and hope is, that if, through the assistance of his grace, we persevere, the Lord will preserve us unto his heavenly kingdom, and finally establish us beyond all those things which at present are, at seasons, found to be so difficult to wade through. Yes, I trust He will vouchsafe to us an experience similar to what the apostle has described in the three concluding verses of the chapter I have already quoted.

No. 127. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

1826, 4 mo. 21.—Thou hast “ not heard much of me since last Yearly Meeting.” The part of the country in which I live having no stones in it, a man may move

about without much noise ; and when I travel in rougher ways, I endeavour to make as little noise as I can well help. But this is only figurative, and to be free and plain, my religious engagements seem to myself to be in various respects comparatively circumscribed. When it pleased Infinite Goodness, of mere unmerited mercy, to be " pacified towards me," for manifold offences and a long course of rebellion, and in unspeakable condescension to command me to endeavour to know the will of God and to do it, the low valley of humility, not to say of humiliation, was pointed out to me as my future dwelling-place, where I must not seek great things for myself, either of one kind or another.

Accordingly, though I trust I have received a part or measure in the ministry of the blessed Gospel, yet it seems confined to an occasional going for a short time and near home, to the incidental attendance of Quarterly or Monthly Meetings of my friends as they are held in course, or which may most of all be my peculiar allotment to sympathise with private individuals in their afflictions, and to mourn often in secret over the unfaithful or wandering mind, offering to the afflicted a word of consolation, and to the prodigal a hand of encouragement, whenever I can meet him as on the threshold of repentance. Ah ! how sweet to my soul are the *too rare* instances of the latter description ! Having been a stranger in the land of spiritual Egypt, I know the heart of a stranger ; having myself received mercy, I can exhort those who have tasted it to confide therein.

No. 128. To SYLVANUS AND MARY FOX.

1826, 5 *mo.* 2.—Mingled experience with various degrees of alternation is my lot to the present day, and perhaps may continue such to the end of life. Far be it from me, however, to complain. I am and have been, through the whole course of my pilgrimage, dealt with in unutterable mercy; and if I cannot at all times fulfil the apostolic injunction, to “rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks;” I think, on a calm retrospect, I can always bless for the severe, and acknowledge myself, as to spiritual concerns, a greater debtor to afflictions than to what are usually considered more prosperous and gratifying dispensations. Thus disciplined and prepared by a course of no very short duration, on waking this morning under depressing feelings, I found myself more disposed to cherish than to dissipate them; and thus waiting, a desire became prevalent in my mind, that, whether the remnant of my days might be few or many, strength proportioned to the increasing weakness of nature might be graciously vouchsafed, and ability afforded to endure whatever of further probation may be permitted to attend the closing scene. Here I found not only a degree of relief from the weight of present exercise, but something like a defence against those anticipations, of which, though reason might teach us the folly, and revelation has put us on our guard, yet amidst all we see, and all we feel, it is so difficult for some of us to keep sufficiently clear: indeed without renewals of faith and hope, I apprehend it would to many be utterly impossible.

Though by comparison I may not be considered very

old, yet I have lived long enough to see most of my early cotemporaries, both in the world and in the church, fall like autumn leaves around me; I am therefore desirous, as far as in me lies, of strengthening the hands of another and another generation, the young and the middle-aged, in the good work in which many of their forefathers were diligently and successfully engaged; that so there may always be a succession of those who are not only skilful in building up the walls of Zion, but of such also as for her sake cannot rest, nor for Jerusalem's sake, hold their peace, until &c. May the Lord in the riches of his wisdom, power, and mercy, hasten this glorious day!

As the usual time for the Yearly Meeting in London approaches, it brings many dear friends to my remembrance, whom I have for a series of revolving years been accustomed to see there; some of them I shall see there no more. But this rather increases than diminishes my affection for those who are left of my old companions, and at the same time excites a feeling of lively interest towards the rising and risen characters of a later day.

No. 129. To J. J. GURNEY.

1826, 7 mo. 21.—How much sweeter than roses or their incense, I have thought, is the piety evinced by some of our beloved young friends, who are called upon in the morning of their day to prove their allegiance by their acquiescence in the will of their Creator and their Redeemer. For early or late, living or dying, resignation appears to

me to be the only altar on which an acceptable sacrifice of any kind can be offered ; and submissively to place upon this altar the opening prospects of early life, and even life itself, seems to be one of the deepest and most precious experiences of a Christian. How lovely then is it to behold the well-disciplined and well-regulated minds of some who are but lately passed even from infancy, and to perceive, as I think we may sometimes plainly do, that the principle to which they have been directed supports them under nature's severest conflicts, and even in the trying hour of dissolution.

No. 130. To J. J. GURNEY.

1826, 7 *mo.* 28.—From early life, and before I could be said to be religious either from education or anything else, I was deeply impressed with the entire spirituality of the Christian dispensation, and of course not very friendly to the outward rites and ceremonies with which even then I thought I could perceive its beautiful and holy simplicity had been encumbered and obscured. Rather than accept it thus abused, overlooking, as perhaps is too often the case, an object near at hand, the simple profession in which I was born, I unhappily sought refuge in metaphysics and scepticism. But here, as might be expected, I found no rest : weary of both, namely the contemplation of a religion attended with outward ordinances on one hand and unbelief on the other ; and still more weary of a corruption from which I was persuaded neither of these could set me free, I was at length drawn to a remembrance of the Saviour and his most precious promise, Matt. xi. 28 : "Come unto me, all

ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In solitude and solicitude my heart conceived and my tongue uttered at the same moment this piercing cry, Lord, grant that a poor fugitive may enter into thy rest! And though I do not like to put upon paper what followed, yet in the confidence with which thou hast treated me, I may tell thee in general terms, what perhaps I might more particularly disclose in conversation, that this cry was condescendingly and immediately answered in the most clear and satisfactory manner;—but not a word of sacraments as they are called, nor of any other ceremonial observances: all was intelligible and spiritual.

From this memorable era in my experience, I believe I may with safety say, I have never "wilfully departed from my God," though the manner and degree in which my feeble nature has endeavoured to please and to serve Him frequently covers me with humiliation, and leaves me no shadow of excuse or cause for complaint in any case of permitted or inflicted suffering. May this gracious Being, of his great love and mercy in Christ Jesus, continue to pity and pardon hearts which are desirous to be found doing his whole will in the midst of manifold tribulations and infirmities!

I am aware that the rite of baptism is generally considered an outward sign of an inward work. But there may be found who have transposed this, and said that water baptism is the substance, and that what is mentioned of baptism by the Holy Ghost, &c. is only figurative. Indeed such is the confusion of theologians in treating of these rituals, as to the time, place, and mode of administration, the choice of proper recipients, and the effects which these are to expect from the ceremony, as to

confirm me in my old persuasion, that these endless controversies, to say nothing of persecution, are much more calculated to produce disciples of Pyrrho than followers of Jesus Christ.

No. 131. To J. J. GURNEY.

1826, 9 mo. 7.—Thou hast expressed an affectionate desire for my preservation through the passing storm. As might perhaps be expected, many cogitations and various feelings have in the course of it attended me. Yet I may thankfully acknowledge that oil has been poured upon the wave, so that quietness in the Divine will has I trust generally predominated over all that would disturb me. Has not David somewhere said, “In the multitude of my thoughts within me, *thy* comforts delight my soul.” I am even thankful that my last letter afforded thee the satisfaction thou hast expressed. I say thankful, because it affords me one proof more, that there is a power which can make anything efficacious. So, it seems, thought poor Cowper, when, in allusion to the bounteous Giver of all good, he says,

“Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
His approbation prosper even mine !”

I rejoice in that thy recent travels have been so safe and satisfactory to thyself, and I hope the Omnipotence of which we have just spoken will prosper the word sent to many who heard it, so that it shall not return void.

No. 132. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1826, 11 *mo.* 14.—Thy lines of the 11th, which hinted a doubt of thy capacity for brotherly love, have so far convinced me beyond a doubt of its real presence, that I accepted the tender at full weight, and with a sweet satisfaction, to which our dear Joseph's postscript was no drawback.

Indeed your letters, with a few others of similar import from dear and distant friends, have, I think, been a means of keeping up my head in a season when the waters have seemed to me to be somewhat deeper than common, and more threatening to my peace. But such is the wisdom and the power of our gracious Helper, that He is never at a loss in the accomplishment of any of his purposes; and therefore when He is pleased to withdraw his sensible presence, or in Scripture phrase, to hide himself, He can, and often does administer needful support to his fainting children through less direct, and it may be in their estimation, through very inferior mediums: thus we have sometimes found an epistle from a friend converted into a messenger of mercy.

I find too in my confinement, for I am a good deal confined, the value of mental resource, limited as I am aware my own is, yet it affords me satisfaction to reflect, that whilst I have had necessary intercourse with the world, I have not been wholly absorbed in it; and that my thoughts and my conversation, though perhaps too much so, have not been wholly confined to my flocks and my herds; whilst I perceive, at least I think so, an increasing beauty and value in the Holy Scriptures, which after a course of

various and desultory reading, now present themselves as a quiet resting-place, and a sort of spiritual home, from which in future I hope less and less to stray.

No 133. To J. J. GURNEY.

1826, 11 *mo.* 20.—I quite agree with thee that we are, as members of our religious Society, under a close trial of our faith. I am glad thou art sensible that such is the case; and I wish a similar feeling might so spread and prevail, as to produce a general humiliation, of which I think there is need; whilst with thee I still trust, that amidst all our derelictions and perplexities, we have ground to hope that we are not a people forsaken of their God: and that such an awful crisis may never arrive to us, either in a “corporate” or individual capacity, I can scarcely doubt is the daily and nightly breathing of many a hidden character.

Of those who may at times thus weep between the porch and the altar, very probably thy amiable cousin P. H. Gurney may be one, to whom the description of thy visit is much what I should have expected. I have seldom met with her but in public, yet sufficiently to have formed this estimate of her worth;—that she has attained to a growth in religion not very common,—to a purity, establishment, and elevation, with which the truth, as one of the manifestations of its wonderful power, dignifies a few of its devoted followers. Does not this opinion harmonize with thine, of being made a little lower than the angels? And yet according to thy feelings, which I fully credit, this dear friend with all her completeness secretly suffers, so that perhaps when smiling on those around her, and

when least suspected by them, even she may know what it is "to groan the unspeakable groan." Well, if when the season for activity is pretty much over, nature in any of us should be permitted to wear away upon this cross, it is no matter. If our sufferings are but according to the will of God, whether outward or inward, the end will be glorious.

In mentioning *Gedney*, I observe thou hast associated greenness with the recollection. This, trifling as it may seem, pleases me, not only because I love *Gedney*, but because it shows thee to be in possession of a secret which some travellers want;—that of trying to be pleased wherever they are, and if there be "a spot of azure in a clouded sky," endeavouring to find it. Thus, in the fens of Lincolnshire, instead of looking for rocks and mountains and forests, thou more wisely kept thy eyes down; and thereby discovered the only beauty we can boast, the verdure of our pastures,—a verdure which, from interest and fancy combined, I have so often hailed with delight; and even now when delight in such objects seems fast wearing away, I still behold with pleasing sensation. Perhaps I seldom have been more soberly or sweetly gratified in this way than during the present autumn, in which the renovated state of the vegetable kingdom has been indeed surprising. In the extraordinary drought of summer, the poor sheep had nibbled the grass very short, and in the most even manner, a work which they execute better than the scythe. So that when genial weather set in, we had very quickly our desert-like appearance changed to that of a second spring, and I think the tenth month, flowers excepted, outvied the fourth in beauty. Perhaps it might not be too much to say, that before the dew was exhaled

in a morning, many of our pastures for softness and shade were comparable to the richest velvet. This description may seem rather poetic, but it is not, I think, exaggerated. Continue then, my dear friend, if thou canst, to be pleased with "green Gedney," and sometimes visit it.

No. 134. To CATHERINE FOSTER.

1827, 1 *mo.* 1.—Under the renewed feelings of a friendship which has weathered the storms and the calms of about half a century ; and which if by the chilling hand of time it have lost anything of its vivacity, may nevertheless by the discipline of the same hand, under the varied exercises of a probationary state, have gained more in solidity than it has lost in appearance—be this as it may, I sit down with much satisfaction, to acknowledge the receipt of an acceptable proof of thy continued regard, as conveyed by thy epistle of the 11th month last. And it is no small addition to this satisfaction to consider that my dear friend, thy long-loved companion, by the insertion of a few lines, characteristic of himself, has adopted thy sentiments of kindness towards me, and acknowledged them as his own.

I sometimes think, and the thought afresh revives, what a favour it is that some of us have had so much time allowed us to be exercised in the school of adversity,—a school in which I believe the oldest are not too old to learn, nor the wisest too wise to be taught. This discipline is also necessary for us ; for as surely as gold is tried in the fire, so surely are acceptable men in the furnace of affliction.

Like thee I was pleased with the few lines thou hast

quoted from a Methodist hymn. They are full of signification, and I hope that the low and humble thoughts of thyself, which seem to have led thee to introduce them, will ultimately be crowned by a safe passage over Jordan, and a happy arrival on the peaceful shores of the promised land, the heavenly Canaan.

What a consolation it is to the Christian, as at seasons, even whilst struggling here below, it is given him with full assurance of faith to believe that these and similar descriptions are not, as infidels and sceptics would fain persuade us, cunningly devised fables to impose upon the ignorant and the credulous; but that they are on the contrary emblems and figures of pure, unsophisticated, substantial realities, which in due time we shall enter into the possession and enjoyment of, if we endure to the end, and hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.

Nor need it much disturb this faith and hope, if for the present we should have to mourn, to weep, and variously to suffer, seeing we are assured on the highest authority that in this world we shall have trouble. And when we contemplate the characters and dispositions of mind with the precious promises annexed to them, set forth in the first few verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew, we may, I think, see and feel the reason and force of the apostle's assertion, that these light afflictions which are but for a moment, shall work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

No. 135. TO JOSIAH FORSTER.

1827, 1 mo. 19.—I lament over the separatists in Ame-

rica ; for if youth and comparative inexperience be so sharply visited, as I believe they often are, for shunning the cross of Christ through human weakness and the momentary fear of man, how great must be the responsibility, and how much sorer the punishment, of those, who with a deliberation that astonishes us, and a perseverance which might be worthy of the best cause, are found, even in life's latest stage, systematically denying the divinity of the Lord that bought them, counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace ! Yet here, sad as the thought is, it seems as if we must leave many on the other side of the Atlantic, and perhaps under various names and different degrees of infection, not a very few in our country.

. I am now brought to a somewhat difficult, though very allowable question in thy letter : "Is agriculture more exposed to danger than commerce?" I perhaps should say not as agriculture merely, which I think possesses many advantages, and is free from some objections attendant on various other occupations. And yet, with all my predilection in its favour, I must acknowledge that the subject is one in which, as in many other cases, theory is not borne out by experience to the full extent of its promise. For congenial as the culture of the soil appears to be with nature, with Providence, and with the mild spirit of the Christian religion, of prime importance too, as it is, to the sustenance of man ; yet it does seem to contribute less to the production of active, spiritually-minded character than is to be found under circumstances, which certainly appear at first sight destitute of many of its privileges.

But this apparent discordance as applied to members of

our little religious Society in the country, is not perhaps more or so much owing to persons being farmers, as to the small bodies and insulated situations in which they live, in many cases almost cut off from proper associates, except with the people at large. Young people in general are desirous of companions suited to their own age, and when these can be found I think it is important they should have them, as for want of this, perhaps as much as from almost anything else, the minds of many in country places, both farmers and others, and some of them not wanting in understanding, education, or employment, have by degrees become so imbued with the maxims and habits of those around them, as at length grievously to depart from the way of truth as professed by Friends and it is to be feared, in some instances, even to cause it to be evil spoken of.

It may now be time for us to avert our eyes from this somewhat gloomy picture. Facts and experience are however things which even our imagination, fertile as it is, can neither create nor cancel. And I should be glad if these did not, so much as I apprehend they do, keep me a mourner as in a strange land. For notwithstanding the reports we frequently hear of "songs from the uttermost parts of the earth," I cannot help considering the living, faithful members of the church militant and universal, in every country, and under every name, to be a poor and afflicted remnant, comparatively few in number, and figuratively dwelling in a wilderness. Thou wilt probably think that I am in reality very gloomy—perhaps temperament, heightened by long and merited discipline in the school of affliction, may have given me such a complexion. And yet I think no man

rejoices more sincerely than I do to meet those of any denomination to whom in the secret feelings of my spirit I can say, "God speed!" Such as I can salute with, Hail! brother, or Hail! sister, Hail! my son, or Hail! my daughter, I bid you all welcome, in that kindred and fellowship (of "brethren and sisters and mothers and children," Mark, x. 30) which our blessed Redeemer promised to those who give up all for his sake: and which, blessed be his name! poor as the world is of spiritual joys, He is still graciously pleased to grant to his little flock and family.

I will now sum up my speculations, should they appear to thee little more, by observing of agriculture, that since I became serious I have been glad that I was a farmer; and of our religious Society, that, under all discouragements, I believe it is by no means forsaken. If therefore in that contrast of situation and circumstance which we possess, thou in town and I in the country,—if in these very different lots we can neither of us comprehend or cure many things which give us concern, let us endeavour through Divine assistance to overcome them by patience, submitting like the blind to be led in a way we know not, and to be guided in paths that we have not known,—a passage which seems to suit my present state of mind, and has afforded me some comfort, at a time when leaning to my own understanding was never that I remember more entirely unavailing.

No. 136. To JOSEPH AND JANE GURNEY.

1827, 1 mo. 27.—Gedney, removed as it is from the great and busy, and even from the more active scenes of

the religious world, affords but little matter of information. I have not very lately been far from home, but within the last few weeks have been at different times an inmate in my brother and sister Massey's family at Spalding, from the wish of their invalid daughter Deborah, the latter stage of whose slow consumptive case was attended with much suffering.

Her conflicts ended last fourth-day morning. The scene for some days past had been a deeply affecting one to me, but was more than compensated by the confirmation of faith and increase of experience, which, in common with my surrounding friends, I hope we all derived from it. It is probable the oldest of us might never before have had so full and fair an opportunity of witnessing the power of religion on the mind in affliction, in sickness, and in death, or one wherein, young as the subject was, grace was so eminently triumphant, not only over the weakness, but amidst the agonies of slowly expiring nature.

One evening as her father and I were standing by her couch, from a state of comparative ease she became suddenly sensible of an approaching struggle: leaning against her parent, and taking my hand, she exclaimed, "O my dear uncle! O my dear father! I am going." She was perfectly collected and sensible throughout the paroxysm, and at short intervals, but in a raised and audible voice, she continued thus to express herself: "This is death!" "I had no idea that dying was like this,—but I can bear it." "Thou (meaning the Almighty) enablest me to bear it." "Lord! into thy hands I commend my spirit." "Jesus, receive my spirit." "O take me to thyself!" She then lay for some time as if departing, but whilst we were expecting to see her breathe her last, she gradually

revived, after which she observed to her mother, "I thought I was going; I was disappointed: but I desire to wait the Almighty's time." She survived several days after this, with various alternations of trial and comfort, though I believe the latter on the whole greatly predominated, as she would frequently say, "I am comfortable;" and once to her father she repeated, in reference to her own state, the well-known line,

"For all I thank Thee, most for the severe."

I should not have transmitted this account to you, did I not think, and hope you will think so too, that there is, when fully considered, more of brightness than of gloom in it.

For how instructive and edifying, as *we* have often heard and seen, and I think have remarked to each other, the closing moments of some dear young persons are found to be—even where the appearance of piety has lain much concealed from outward observation, it has nevertheless been elicited in an extraordinary degree on the approach of death. Then a faith not built upon systems, but on the Rock of Ages, has shone forth with effulgence and power; then a hope not deduced from the subtleties of the schools has to the humbling admiration of beholders discovered itself, as an anchor to the departing soul, sure and steadfast; and the whole of the case has manifested, too clearly to be mistaken, that not more by their expressions, though these are sometimes remarkable, than by the strength of mind with which they were enabled to pass through the dark valley, by these babes and sucklings, praise of the purest and most exalted kind has been perfected, and ascribed to that very adorable Name, who has

thus given them the victory over their last enemy. Let us, therefore, my valued friends, as we may be enabled, unite in the sacred anthem which the dying example of these young believers seems so eminently calculated to inspire.

No 137. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1827, 3 *mo.* 20.—As the little I mentioned in my last of my niece D. B. Massey's illness and death was so favourably received, I am inclined to send thee half a dozen copies of a more detailed account, which her affectionate father had struck off for private distribution among some of his friends and neighbours.

D. M. was when in health rather remarkable for cheerfulness of disposition, which however she managed so well as to be scarcely ever observed to speak censoriously of any one. She was also charitable and humane, noticing the poorest of her neighbours with a tender regard. During her illness, trying as some parts of it were, her mind was preserved free from the slightest perceptible aberration; and she seemed to have a very quick sense of the presence or absence of spiritual good, circumstances which I think added weight to her expressions. She was also freely communicative of the many changes that were permitted to attend her mind, thus availing herself of the aids of friendship and books, without appearing to neglect a due attention to that deep inward exercise, which an apostle has emphatically denominated "working out our own salvation with fear and trembling." I would not be diffuse, but as it can be done safely, I thought this brief sketch of an amiable character might not be unpleasant to thee.

The agitation of the elements seems now to have subsided, and more genial weather both to animal and vegetable life has taken place, the present being a fine and gentle showery day, attended in the fields, and, were I in Norfolk perhaps I might add in the groves and gardens, with many pleasant harbingers of spring. Even at Gedney we have a few; and I now sit within a very short distance of building rooks, sportive lambs, and blooming hepaticas. How kind is the Author of nature!

NO. 138. TO RICHARD COCKIN.

1827, 5 mo. 5.—Shouldst thou ask the cause of my not writing, it might seem strange for a man out of business to ascribe it to too much occupation. And yet if I mistake not, this has been the principal occasion; my mind having for a long time past been so involved in suffering, as in no very inconsiderable degree to seal my lips and restrain my pen. Of these trials I account the general illness with which both my own and my son's family were visited last autumn to make but a small part: indeed I viewed with composure, perhaps I ought not to say with hope, the probability that I might be gently passing away. My afflictions therefore, if such I may call them, have proceeded from other sources; and I will not conceal from thee, as a father in the truth, that sympathy with the sufferings of many individuals, and solicitude for the state of our poor yet dear little religious society in divers places, have often brought me into, and generally kept me in a reduced and stripped situation of spiritual feeling; so that the caution for which thou hast kindly given me credit,

may perhaps, as to outward religious acts either by word or writing, have on the whole rather increased than diminished.

It is not a very difficult thing to assent with the understanding to important truths of any kind : but really to feel the force of these truths is another thing ;—to be made truly sensible that of ourselves we can really do nothing ; and to see that with the addition of a living and powerful ministry, for such we have, it is utterly impossible without the blessing of the Lord, and their own obedience, either to raise or to support a single spiritual character, or even to keep alive our own souls ; for it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

When we consider that time is needful to give these important and humiliating religious experiences ; that it is also not until the lapse of years that some of our greatest outward trials overtake us, in the dissolution of our oldest and closest friendships, the loss of adult children, and other painful circumstances ; when all this is duly reflected on, does it not seem as if some of life's bitterest cups—some of affliction's severest strokes, and some of nature's greatest bereavements were reserved for the latter stages of our probationary course ? And if we view this scale of discipline as intended or at least calculated to wean us more effectually from the present world and prepare us for a better, by putting those Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love, which we have long professed, to the closest trial just before we quit the stage,—is not this somewhat analogous to what is practised in the schools of literature and science, where the hardest lessons are given to the highest class of learners ?

I can well understand the relief thou mentionest, having

myself experienced it, from being out of business in the late difficult time : it is indeed one of the greatest privileges in life's decline ; and that thou met with a successor who follows thy practice of closing shop on meeting-days, must be a very pleasant thing to thee. We ought to number our blessings ; and amidst all my complainings, I am sometimes favoured to see that I have many to number, and that it is to goodness infinite and mercy inconceivable, I owe everything.

No. 139. TO SARAH SQUIRE.

1827, 7 mo. 7.—Ah ! my dear friend, unworthiness is indeed engraven upon my heart in characters never to be obliterated ; but blessed be the name of a gracious God, the covenant of his mercy is also I trust indelibly engraven there ; so that although in days past, sin has greatly and grievously abounded, yet since the kindness and goodness of the Most High appeared to my benighted soul, grace has much more abounded to his praise and my own humiliation. May I never desire to rise above this state of self-abasement, until time with all its trials and temptations is at an end ; and until, should such be my favoured experience, death shall be swallowed up in victory ! Then indeed, and not till then, all will be happiness without alloy. In the meantime, let us consider the feeling of a little peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, an unspeakable favour ; and even the more negative sense of no condemnation is a thing by no means to be despised.

No. 140. To H. C. BACKHOUSE.

Selby, 1827, 8 mo. 2.—I am indeed prepared by experience to sympathize with the most faint and feeble of my fellow-travellers. Yes: I can cordially take the poorest of the mental poor by the hand, and say, My brother, or my sister, though thou mayst not at present be able to rejoice in thy tribulations, yet endeavour to be thankful; and low or weak as thou art ready to apprehend thyself, yet count it a great mercy to have been preserved hitherto through the shocks and the shades, and other vicissitudes of thy probationary course. Hold on thy way, and may eternal Wisdom be thy guide!

I unite with thee in the sentiment, that there is more of spiritual life in society than in solitude, and that there is more of this society in towns than in fields and in woods is equally true; yet we cannot but love rural scenes; and impressed perhaps with the feeling that "God made the country and man made the town," we find the latter suffer greatly by comparison, as all artificial things must do when placed in contrast with the workmanship of a perfect Creator. Indeed I am so much influenced by this thought, as to ascribe to the country a loveliness compared with which the proudest city is but a heap of lumber, or mass of confusion. This, however, has little to do with a conclusion which I have been brought into by slow degrees, and with some reluctance, that, allowing to each their local advantage and disadvantage, yet on the whole, both the quantity and quality of active or positive virtue is found to rise higher in social than secluded life; and this observation, or rather fact, I think applies in a remarkable manner, though I

can scarcely tell why, and have been very unwilling to believe it, to our little religious society ; yet, I could hope almost against hope, for my favourite retirement—still, I love the country ; and the life of a farmer, such as I could imagine, though it might seem a little Arcadian, has charms even for my age, which no other employment possesses.

Thy analogy of nature and grace in their economy of power and of evidence pleases me much as it seems so fully to accord both with experience and the scriptural assurance, that according to the day (that is neither more nor less than the occasion calls for) shall our strength be ; and does not this account for the strippedness and desertion we are often left in, when specific duty ceases to be required of us ? And yet I do not consider this bereavement of sensible good to be a state either of rest or of idleness ; for can endurance be more wearisome or watchfulness more difficult than when we seem left to ourselves and to our enemy ? a condition that perhaps is more trying, than when we can neither see nor pray, but only wait as well as we can, which is often poorly enough, for its termination. These seasons may nevertheless be useful to us for our deeper humiliation and the increase of our self-knowledge, showing us, in a way that perhaps nothing else could, what we are and what we are not.

No. 141. To J. AND H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1827, 9 mo. 11.—Seldom have I known deeper humiliation. On looking towards the source of purity and perfection, I beheld a series of wisdom, goodness, and power

extended towards me all my life long ; turning my eyes in another direction, the contrast was almost too great to bear, so that I was indeed brought very low.

As I take you to be converts, not merely to the opinion but to the fact, of human imbecility, and of man's entire dependence for physical, intellectual, and divine strength, I express myself with entire freedom on the subject ; believing that you will not, as I think is sometimes ignorantly done, ascribe either to enthusiasm or nervous affection, an experience which is at least costly, and perhaps designed to be useful. You will not, I am persuaded, reproach me as visionary ; especially when I tell you that through the renewed extension of that glorious attribute, which those who receive it in another life will praise for ever, my bands are once more loosened, and liberty so far proclaimed to my captive spirit, that with a considerable degree of comfort and satisfaction I can now salute you as dearly beloved strangers and pilgrims, yet companions and fellow-travellers in our common journey through a wilderness, in which, mingled with pleasant elevations, is found also many a valley of tears.

After all that has been said or written, and much has been attempted, to make the way to heaven plain and easy, I am of the apostle's mind, that great is the mystery of godliness ; and that difficult to comprehend are the dealings of the Most High with his finite creatures, in order to prepare them for usefulness in the church militant here, and happiness in the church triumphant hereafter. I am sure it is not natural to me to take such a view as this ; on the contrary, I should like to account for everything ; but I am constrained into the conclusion

just stated by past experience, as well as by that confirmation of it which I have so amply received within the last few days, wherein, instead of the peace I might have been tempted to look for, behold trouble!

I would not, however, have even hinted at such exercises as these, which I have generally been accustomed to wade through in solitude and silence, had not precious faith been a little renewed, and hope, sweet hope, again beamed upon me, inclining me to invite you, my dear friends, to join in devout acknowledgments to the Author of them both, who continues at seasons to exalt Himself in the eyes even of his most unworthy children above all thanksgiving, adoration, and praise.

No. 142. To J. J. GURNEY.

1827, 10 mo. 5.—Though I believe it is better that many of our sorrows should be borne, and our prayers uttered in secret, yet I believe there are times when we may with seriousness and discretion open our minds to a friend. Led to it by our mutual sympathies, I therefore am inclined to tell thee, my dear friend, that thou hast not been mistaken in supposing that the shades of the evening sometimes appear to me rather sombre—that at other times I seem to myself feeble and sore broken. Again, the waters are so deep, and the tossing from wave to wave so incessant, that there is no standing,—whilst at the same time the surrounding darkness is too palpable and dense even for prayer to penetrate. All this has of latter days come within the range of my experience, and was perhaps never more my experience than at the time thy

last letter arrived, which was the more welcome to me because it not only spoke distinctly of such trials as these, but of the possibility of preservation in the midst of them. This brings to my recollection the remarkable language of the evangelical prophet to a tried remnant formerly, "Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea."

That I may ever be found among the remnant, however small its number, who under all circumstances are desirous of pleasing and serving the Lord, is I think my continual and earnest desire. On the closest examination, I cannot discover, great as my weakness is, any change in this secret bent and purpose of my heart; which I therefore reverently hope is fixed, trusting in the Lord; and trusting also that, through the continued assistance of his grace, all may yet, before very long, end well for time and eternity. Thus impressed, I therefore conclude to wade and struggle on, deep and dark though the opposing waters be; for we know that although we are every way unworthy of the notice and love of our Redeemer, yet He is altogether worthy of ours. We know also that every blessing we can enjoy, temporal or spiritual, must proceed from Him:—forsaking or forgetting Him, to whom then shall we go?

I think I never before so clearly comprehended, or so highly appreciated the important Gospel doctrine of the forgiveness of sins, as during the cloudy and otherwise comfortless season of which I have attempted to give thee some idea. In the midst of surrounding gloom, this cheering and soul-sustaining doctrine has been like a lantern to my feet, health and marrow to my bones,—all in all to me. Grant me but this, O my Redeemer! I have

been ready to cry, and I have nothing else to hope, to fear, or to pray for. Blessed, indeed, is the man whose transgressions are blotted out, and whose sins are pardoned: yea, happy, thrice happy, is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin. Covered with the robe of righteousness, clothed in the wedding garment of salvation and praise, even the forgiven sinner may triumphantly exclaim, Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly! Thy poor, unworthy servant, leaning on thy mercy, is ready!

No. 143. To JOSEPH AND JANE GURNEY.

1827, 10 *mo.* 6.—Not knowing how long I may be able to travel, I have devoted much of the past summer to journeys of love and good will, by which I mean going here and there with a disposition and with a desire to “rejoice with those who do rejoice, and mourn with those who mourn.” The extreme points of these perambulations have, I think, been London, Yarmouth, Ackworth, and Darlington: a circuit which you know includes many English acres, and as you will perhaps believe, has included also many interesting scenes and circumstances, with their correspondent feelings.

How surprising, in various points of view, is the rising and falling of successive generations, and how many of these changes have *we* seen! they have even glided before us like visions; and yet here is no vacuum, nor any standing still: the world is everywhere full, and everywhere active. Is not this, at once, an effect and a proof of Omnipotence?

My late visit to —, which still often occupies my

thoughts, was, as it respected my private friends, all I could desire from it. As it regarded our common cause it had its alloy, and in fellowship with them I grieved and suffered from finding that trouble had made an entrance within their borders. How true it is that sin and sorrow are to be found in every place, though in different shades and degrees ! Here we have them of the darkest hue and the bitterest taste. Ah ! poor learning, how feeble thy protection ! thou art indeed good, very good, in thy place ; but out of it, good for nothing, as we have a cloud of witnesses to prove ; and where is thy proper station ? In entire subserviency to, but not as a substitute for, or in competition with, *Divine grace*. I believe this is unpopular doctrine in the schools, and equally unfashionable in the world ; but that is no matter to me, it is my judgment, and I neither can help it, nor desire it should be otherwise.

After returning home about a month since, reduced in health and strength, I soon felt the effects of a change into this less salubrious atmosphere, and have been prevented, by the reigning complaint of the season, from attending our Quarterly Meeting, which was disappointing to me. [After alluding to other cases of domestic illness, the letter thus instructively closes.] All these things, as you may suppose, have had a tendency to bring me rather low both in body and mind. I see however so much more to be thankful for than to complain of, that, under some renewed sense, I trust, of the Lord's continued mercy and goodness, I would tenderly invite you to rejoice with me therein.

No. 144. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

1827, 10 *mo.* 15.—I expect we shall find whatever direction we take, where there are any friends, some rightly concerned individuals, both as to principle and practice, and however small the number of these may be, compared with the whole, still it is a mercy that there are here one, and there another, who are sincerely endeavouring to do the best they can, for it appears to be very much owing to the labours and the prayers of this little remnant, that, under the blessing of the Most High, the rest are kept together, even in the degree they are. Still the few have, and I believe must expect to have, their trials ; but if they are faithful, they have also their consolations.

The General Meeting at Ackworth was large, evincing a great degree of interest in the minds of Friends towards this valuable Institution, and I believe few went away disappointed. The mode of Scriptural instruction established of late years seems to be excellent, and to surmount in practice, the well-meant scruples and justifiable fears which perhaps should always guard a new theory.

Whether anything further, and what, can be done to improve the condition of our Society by education or discipline, I must leave to more projecting heads and better qualified minds than my own. One thing, however, on the negative side of the question, I do feel interested about, which is, that nothing may be attempted which shall in any way affect the manner of holding or conducting our meetings of worship. For whatever those who as-

semble in them may be, I believe, as to their constitution and establishment, they are what they should be, according to the spirit and letter of the Gospel ; and, consequently, that we no sooner touch them by any contrivances of our own, however specious in appearance, than we are in danger of losing the little remaining strength we have, and of becoming, virtually at least, what we are sometimes reproached with having already become,—another people. I am not however alarmed by my subject, though I have been thus led to touch upon it,—*gently*, I hope.

No. 145. TO JOSEPH GURNEY.

1827, 11 mo. 22.—If I have seasons of trial, (and who escapes them ?) I trust I have also the faith and hope of a Christian, though of his patience I may not boast. As to my health, I scarcely know what to say of it : I have, certainly, for many weeks past, suffered a partial loss of appetite and rest, and, as a natural consequence, some degree of strength, which makes exertion fatiguing and irksome to me. I however take a ride or walk most days, and generally get to our little meeting, at which I thought I derived some comfort yesterday. But what a favour it is to have the use of my limbs and faculties ; and if I am indeed going down, that it is so very gently.

I sometimes think it is an especial privilege to glide out of life by unperceived decay, or, if happily prepared for it, a still greater mercy to be translated as by a touch ethereal. I could almost pray for one or the other, did I not consider that quiet submission is more befitting than such a prayer ; for, after all our anxieties, resignation is the

Christian's motto, not to be worn, like the Jewish phylacteries, on the forehead or on the arm, but in the most secret recesses of the heart.

No. 146. To H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1827, 12 *mo.* 25.—I am very lately returned from a short excursion amongst my friends, in which, between the afflictions of many on one hand, and the unfaithfulness of some on the other, my mind was brought into a state of deep and painful exercise, wherein almost all the little encouragement I could find was derived from the degree of help graciously afforded, proportionate to the ills of such a cloudy and dark day, confirming me in a sentiment I had previously adopted, that it is an equal favour to receive strength to suffer, when such is our lot, as a will to serve when thereunto called. Here I was not only able to plant my foot as on a firm bottom, but even to take some comfort from a fresh remembrance of the apostle's remarkable language, 2 Cor. iv. 8—11.

Indeed I think the whole of this and a few succeeding chapters are encouraging to true Gospel ministers, in this as well as former days. I was particularly struck with what is said in the verses alluded to, of always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. The self-renunciation and daily cross which the disciple of Christ has to bear, may, I have thought, be not unfitly compared to the dying of the Lord Jesus; whilst the patience, resignation, trust, and confidence in God, with which this crucifixion of the will and affections is endured,

may, more than anything else can do, manifest both to ourselves and others the life of Jesus in us, whilst clothed with these tabernacles of clay; so that the few who by this course attain to the perfection of which I believe it is susceptible, and at which, as the mark of the prize, we should all aim, may with humble confidence say, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Gal. ii. 20.

If thou canst view this important subject as it seemed opened to me in the time of my recent trial, I hope the aids from Scripture which I have partially quoted, may be equally beneficial to each of us, in keeping our heads just above water whenever the floods are permitted to surround. But I am somewhat apprehensive lest the low and plaintive strain into which I am so often almost involuntarily led in my letters, may induce thyself and others of my dear friends, whom I should be sorry to make unprofitably sad, to exclaim on the sight of my handwriting, "Behold the complainer, or the dreamer, cometh!" either from a suspicion that I make too much of my feelings, or that I have not felt what I attempt to describe. To this I can only say, that it is both my desire and my endeavour to speak or write of nothing religiously, of which I have not had some experience.

Nor need it surprise us, if, as life advances, should spiritual strength and experience happily advance with it, our burdens may rather increase than diminish. I sometimes think that in this respect, though so different in some others, there is considerable analogy between the Christian school and those of literature and science: in

both, the most difficult lessons seem to be given to the highest class of learners. It might not, however, be wise in either case to tell young beginners too much of this, lest it should affright and discourage them. No, let them enjoy their milk for babes, and sing how sweet it is, as long as they can; but for us, and such as us, stronger meat is prepared. Indeed, I suppose we shall readily admit, that the middle and closing stages of an ordinarily long life, must, from natural causes, be subject to trials, of which youth can have but a faint conception and no experience, being in reality strangers to many of the circumstances out of which arise the cares and the sorrows of age, though of a virtuous and redeemed one. Age has its comforts too, in its near approach to imperishable joys.

No. 147. To J. J. GURNEY.

1828, 1 *mo.* 25.—That thou wast able to get through thy engagements so much to thy relief whilst abroad, and experienced such sweet peace on thy return home, I am pretty certain thou wilt conclude with me to be a renewed and unmerited mercy; for we are but unprofitable servants, and but for the renewings of the Holy Ghost, what in the sight of infinite purity and perfection must be our own righteousness? The Scripture tells us, filthy rags; and there is not one of its important truths to which I believe we shall each more fully subscribe. Perhaps it was the consideration of this truth that suggested the hymn which contains the following stanza:

“ Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;

Naked, come to thee for dress,
 Helpless, look to thee for grace,
 To the cleansing fountain fly ;
 Wash me, Saviour, or I die !”

Thou makest inquiry after our last Quarterly Meeting which I managed to attend, and am well satisfied that I did so, though it seemed chiefly to *suffer* ; yet as strength for the day was measurably afforded, there was no cause for repining, but rather of thankfulness for a degree of ability to enter by sympathy into the severer sufferings of others—a sense of which at that time was the principal cause of my own. I think I never knew at any former period so much private and domestic affliction in our Quarterly Meeting, as I have good cause for believing has of late existed in it—few families having entirely escaped the visitation of trouble in some shape or other—which, considering the present to be a time we not unfrequently hear spoken of as “one of outward ease,” almost surprises me. Indeed I can make nothing of this difficulty by reasoning upon it, but find enough to do to watch and hold fast, endeavouring at the same time, as ability is afforded, to encourage my dear brethren and sisters to steadfastness and endurance in our most holy faith, of which perhaps adversity occasions the severest, though not the only trial.

This state of things thou wilt believe causes me some low seasons, yet I find, as I have sometimes found before, and a favour I esteem it, that, contrary to the common remark, of body and mind rising or falling together, when the latter has been the most deeply exercised the health of the former has improved. Whilst on the other hand, I have a few times known that, with death in near anticipation, the

mind has mounted as on eagle's wings, without a grain of pressure upon it, or the shadow of a cloud in its way ; so that, as far as my own observation goes at least, body and mind have in the most critical moments been alternately helpful to each other. Whether this be generally the case I cannot tell ; nor does it matter, if we are but favoured to get safely through our probationary course, which shall have been the greatest sufferer, flesh or spirit, or whether their sufferings shall have been most frequently in unison or otherwise. Perhaps this circumstance may be contingent as to us, and yet nicely regulated by the wise arrangement of an overruling Providence, with whom are hid the secret things both of time and eternity. How safe and delightful it is to rest every doubt and difficulty which we either cannot comprehend, or which it does not concern us to know here, that is in God !

No. 148. To J. J. GURNEY.

1828, 3 mo. 4.—Still affected by the private sufferings of divers individuals, as well as by the low and stripped state of our little church in these parts, the state of my mind for some time past may not unaptly be described in this language of the Psalmist : “ I was dumb with silence ; I held my peace even from good, and my sorrow was stirred.”

Such, however, were my feelings for some days, a few weeks ago, that I was almost ready to conclude something like a new era in my spiritual experience had taken place, in which, if the days of mourning were not ended, they might have received such mitigation as would henceforth

enable me to journey forward with an increased degree of strength and consolation ; but herein I was mistaken. The south wind ceased to blow as from the garden of God ; the spices thereof no longer flowed forth ; and I found myself, I can scarcely tell how, again a humble resident in the valley of Achor, where the only door of hope seems to be, that those who mourn availingly shall ultimately find a blessed exchange, and such as suffer with Christ according to the Divine will, will assuredly, in another and a better world, reign with Him, not transiently, as in this, but for ever.

In thus unbosoming myself to a beloved and confidential friend, I hope I shall neither offend nor discourage him. I have aimed at nothing further than simple information of how it is faring with me, and in doing so I desire not to go beyond the example of the two disciples who communed together and were sad. Happier still should I feel myself to escape the gentle reprehension which they received, and class with those of whom the prophet Malachi says, that they spake often one to another, and, as he clearly intimates, with full acceptance. It is quite evident, however, that at the present juncture I ought to be grateful, if permitted to sit down with the poor disciples, and receive with meekness their reproof, “ O fools and slow of heart,” &c. I do not, therefore, my dear friend, ask thy pity, still less would I put thee to the cost of sympathy ; but when thou art clothed with the spirit of supplication, I desire an interest therein, that, in the hour of tribulation, however induced, my faith and patience may not fail.

I have not heard from or written to thy dear uncle for a considerable time. I am aware, that, by the exercise of

our understanding only, we are poor judges of each other's mental circumstances, yet I cannot sometimes help thinking that there must be considerable difference between the spiritual experience of some of my beloved and honoured friends and fellow-labourers, and my own general allotment. *They* seem at liberty, whilst *I* am in prison ; they are at large, but I am in bonds—bonds which just now appear to be increasing in strength. But for a full view of what I apprehend and believe of myself, and of what I hope and believe of many others, I will refer thee to 1 Cor. iv. 10: “ We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ ; we are weak, but ye are strong ; ye are honourable, but we are despised ;” and as much more of the chapter as thou mayst justly think is my condition. Within the last few seconds, I have begun to think that anywhere but in a letter so much of one's self would be almost too much even for good-nature ; I therefore obey the suggestion, and turn from the idol.

No. 149. To J. J. GURNEY.

1828, 4 mo. 28.—How sweet is the union, and how delightful the communion, of saints ! By this appellation I mean those, and those only, who, according to their measure, whatever that measure may be, are what they are “ through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ ;” a doctrine which, if fully admitted, leaves nothing for the creature to glory in, and leads to the humble acknowledgment, that our sufficiency is not of ourselves, but of God.

I am the more tenacious on this point, because there are not wanting, in the present as in past days, certain plausible popular speakers and writers, who, whilst they would not perhaps assert it in words, appear covertly to assume the untrue and dangerous opinion, that man is fully competent to his own concerns, spiritual and temporal. In both I believe he has need of the blessing and aid of a superintending Providence.

My mind is at present enjoying a pause of comparative tranquillity, in contemplating the extensive fields of moral and religious labour which the vast wilderness of this world exhibits to the mental eye; waiting, at the same time, to see or to feel if there be any little thing for me to do, were it only opening or shutting a door for my fellow-servants; for truly I esteem it a greater honour to be even thus employed, than to be accounted the son of Pharaoh's daughter, or to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

No. 150. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

1828, 5 *mo.* 6.—The return of spring does indeed afford much food for the contemplative and reflecting mind, both of youth and age; though the thoughts of these very differently circumstanced classes may take an almost opposite direction. The former, exhilarated by the buoyancy of animal spirits and the universal smile of nature, look forward with sanguine, often too sanguine, expectations from the future; whilst those on whom these prospects have not only opened but closed, and who have nearly seen the end of all earthly perfection, are apt to look behind them. Thus to me, and such as me, it is not an unpleasing

though somewhat pensive employment, to number the lovely springs that have passed over our heads, (in my case, fifty-four since I left school,) and to turn over the chequered page of our own history, and that of the times in which we have lived, as I can easily do, for more than half a century.

In tracing these records, although I find some blots, some blunders, and here and there a very zigzag and awkward line, yet I really have no desire to try the ground over again, even were I to begin with the advantages which the first experiment might be supposed to afford. For I find former experience, though of some value, is insufficient for preservation; it cannot supersede watchfulness, nor does it preclude warfare. I therefore, on the most serious consideration, would not wish to live such a life always, but rather reposing on that mercy which has hitherto helped me, and, craving its continuance, wait as patiently as I can all the days of my appointed time until my change come;—a change which is a very important one, and yet when faith supports and hope illumines, (or vice versa,) this prospect, though solemn, is found to be rather sweet than painful.

Thou hast remarked my being rather fond of poetry. I think when carefully selected and moderately used, it cheers with sobriety, and instructs without fatigue, and thus innocently relieves the severer exercises of the mind, as well as materially assists an impaired memory.

Having mentioned spring and poetry, I am reminded of an elegy on this interesting season, by the late John Scott of Amwell. On my way from the first Yearly Meeting I attended in 1783, I spent a little time with this friend at his brother Samuel's, at Hertford. I remember

them both well; and the recollection of that particular occasion, at which Samuel Spavold was also present, is among the number of my pleasant *backward* prospects. How kind is Providence to reserve a capacity for declining life, by which

Pensive memory oft retraces,
 Scenes of bliss for ever fled ;
 Lives in former times and places,
 Holds communion with the dead.

No. 151. To H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1828, 7 mo. 25.—I am inclined to tell thee, that, after one of those privations to which the Christian traveller is subject, from the withdrawing of an influence, without some degree of which his knowledge is useless and his labours unprofitable, and after the self-scrutiny and other humiliations usually attendant on such occasions, I am once more permitted to look upon Zion, the city of the saints' solemnities, with a little revival of faith and hope, and to behold the true worshippers therein with some renewal of gospel-fellowship and love.

As we have, I think, heretofore remarked, what a wonder and a mystery is the state of human probation, so that notwithstanding the holy fellowship, the precious communion, and the many other mercies, both temporal and spiritual, which are vouchsafed in the course of our earthly pilgrimage, there still are seasons, when with submission we could gladly exchange it for regions of brighter day, for scenes of more pure and uninterrupted felicity; and when, in contemplation of the glory which shall hereafter

be revealed, we are ready to say, Blessed will be the hour that shall anchor us in the haven of safety!—thrice happy and blessed the moment when we shall set our weary feet on the land that lies on the other side Jordan; a land flowing with milk and honey!—I express myself thus with the less hesitation or reluctance, because I know that it is not the language of a repining but of a grateful heart.

No. 152. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

Yarmouth, 1828, 9 mo. 2.—At our first coming, I had in view from my chamber a beautiful moon and her twinkling attendants presiding with mild and silent influence over slumbering nature. And this morning I opened my eyes at rather an early hour, upon what I consider to be an assemblage of the grandest objects of this material world: the sky above and the ocean below; and these uniting to appearance in the distant and level line of the horizon, whilst the sun irradiated the whole scene with a splendour which it is not for me to describe, further than by observing, that nothing visible gives me such an exalted idea of the infinity, immensity, and magnificence of creative power, and the littleness of man, as the combined effect of contemplating the wonderful objects to which I have just alluded. Well, indeed, might the Psalmist exclaim, “When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained! what is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him?” And yet adored be his holy and reverend name, He does visit his children

even in this their low estate ; and, as thou hast hinted, is at seasons found amidst the two or three.

Whilst, however, we not only admit, but insist on the doctrine of immediate revelation, as communicated by the perceptible influences of the Holy Spirit, we some of us feel, and surely none more than I, the need there is to guard against the insinuating activity of the imagination, which would obtrude itself into everything, to the great detriment and hindrance of the work of sanctification and peace, so that I very much unite in thy sentiments on the activity of this restless faculty, as well as on the only preservation from it being derived from that salvation for which, doubtless in all ages, numbers have been brought to cry in the earnest and pathetic language of " Help, Lord ! or we perish ! "

No. 153. To H. C. BACKHOUSE.

Selby, 1828, 9 mo. 19.—However it may at times consist with the will of our Heavenly Father for the promotion of his own glory, to bring some of his servants as to the top of a mount, and there to show them wonderful things, even things unutterable ; yet whatever they may think, it might neither be good for them, nor answer the purpose designed, for them always to abide there. So far from it, they may have again and again to enter into sufferings, and perhaps they will find that their safest enjoyment rises little higher than a capacity for rejoicing in hope, being patient in tribulation, and continuing instant in prayer.

I came hither a few days since, with my youngest

daughter in a steam-vessel from Yarmouth. After being thrown with some force from one side of the cabin to the other, at the suggestion of the captain I lay down on a mattress on the floor, where I got a little refreshing sleep, which was followed by the reflection, that, if men were more willing to descend from those elevations both of body and mind, to which they so much aspire, they might spare themselves some trouble, and enjoy safer and sweeter repose.

Although I have not entirely recovered from the effect of my voyage, for *such* a farmer must be allowed to call an hundred miles at sea, and about the same distance on the rivers Yare, Humber, and Ouse; yet I do not regret having taken it. It has furnished me to a certain extent not merely with new ideas, but with a heretofore unknown experience of the wonders of the mighty deep, and of the still mightier creative power, who laid its foundations so sure, and whose omnipotent voice said, "Hitherto shalt thou come but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

No. 154. To J. J. GURNEY.

1828, 12 mo. 5.—I would not dwell too minutely on those recent events, which both on the grounds of religion and humanity affect and afflict us. Rather let us turn to the Lord, who, though He has permitted us to be thus deeply wounded, can assuredly heal and bind us up. He has heretofore helped us, let us trust that He will do it again: yea, has He not at different stages of our pilgrimage; when we have fallen or been ready to fall into

“the horrible pit,” brought us safely through, “set our feet upon a rock,” and even put a new song into our mouth? Shall we then despair?

No. 155. To ELIZABETH (JOSEPH) FRY.

1829, 1 *mo.* 10.—How many and surprising are the changes to which we are liable, and that actually befall the Christian traveller in his journey through a state, which, though it has some bright spots, still as a whole admits of the comparison to a wilderness and a valley of tears; so that not merely as respects his wonderful physical formation, and the union of this material tabernacle to an immortal mind, but on a view also of his spiritual condition and circumstances, may we not justly exclaim, “What a miracle to man is man!” truly such a standing and awful miracle, as might almost paralyze him with astonishment and dismay, had not his omnipotent Creator provided a means whereby he may shape his course by night and by day, in the calm and in the storm, through the most trying and difficult vicissitudes of his probationary pilgrimage towards a land of rest.

These, my valued friend, are not expressions of an unfelt theory, and if, as I believe, they are truths, I have learned them in the deeps—those depths into which, though not a very public character, I have had both on my own account, and on account of others, frequently to descend—and I think never oftener or deeper than of late—so much so, that I have sometimes found it difficult to hold fast and to endure, with the patience and resignation befitting my years and religious profession; yet amidst all I have thankfully to acknowledge being preserved, even at

times when, in my own apprehension, I had not, as I ought to have done, sufficiently kept the word of the Lord's patience : what mercy ! what infinite and adorable mercy !

In these tempestuous seasons, how busy is the enemy and accuser in endeavouring by a variety of suggestions to sink us below hope, at one time insinuating that his temptations and our sins are synonymous,—at another, that, when we are corrected by our Heavenly Father it is in inexorable displeasure, and that when the light of the Divine countenance may be occasionally withdrawn from our sensible perception, we never more shall behold it ! These, and many more are his devices against us in the cloudy and dark day ; but let us not believe him : it is one thing to be tempted, or even chastened, and quite another to be cast away : and, thanks be to God, (I trust we can each devoutly ejaculate,) who though He may, as in the case of his servant Job formerly, have permitted us to be deeply tried, has not given us as a prey to the devourer ; let us then endeavour not only to pray, but to trust, that, as we have been helped hitherto, we shall be helped to the end.

I probably should not be so free on these weighty subjects, did I not in addition to some experience, apprehend myself supported by various writers of sacred Scripture, especially David, whose eventful and extraordinary life seems to afford both an example and illustration of the miracle to which we have alluded, as comprising almost everything both inward and outward, that man can be supposed to do, enjoy, or suffer. I think the eighty-eighth and eighty-ninth Psalms are remarkable for their descriptions of deep and various exercise.

That I may not weary thee by a multiplicity of words,

I will only add a few texts as they occur, from which I have sometimes derived comfort and strength: "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." "If God be for us, who shall be against us?" With Him nothing is impossible. "Ye are of more value than many sparrows: the hairs of your head are all numbered." "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." These, and other passages too numerous to mention, all make for one object,—the exciting and keeping alive of our faith, hope, and confidence in an unchangeable and almighty Friend, as our refuge and deliverer, even in those critical junctures wherein we may be the most deeply proved.

No. 156. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

1829, 1 *mo.* 15.—Although active characters are wanted, and it is a favour we have some such, yet it does not follow that those whose lot is more secluded need be indifferent to what is passing within their own circle, or unaffected by the reports which reach them from a distance. The mind may visit remote scenes and individuals, when the body is stationary. And might I be allowed to mention anything of my own experience in support of this testimony, I could assure thee, that I also, in my comparative solitude, neither possess a mind untravelled, nor a heart at rest. May we not then hope, that, according to their respective gifts and allotments, varied as these may be, all the living members of Christ's church make but one body, of which He is the Head. There is also much comfort in believing

according to the apostle's doctrine, that they have need of each other ; and may, in many different ways and degrees, be engaged in the promotion of our common cause.

My youngest daughter being poorly in the autumn, and recommended to a change of situation, I accompanied her and her sister to Yarmouth, where we stationed ourselves directly on the beach for a few weeks. On her health it seemed to have a very beneficial effect ; we all enjoyed the sea, and the society of the few friends of the place, who were very kind to us ; and after a tossing and sickly passage in a steam-vessel from Yarmouth to Selby, I returned home, and am even now perhaps deriving benefit from the whole journey. Still, without neglecting the use of means, or disputing the salutary agency of second causes, how sweet it is, when faith is sufficient to look through these mediums to Him, without whose superadded blessing every other resource must fail ; and to accept all that we enjoy, whether health of body or peace of mind, from the bountiful hand of unmerited mercy !

No. 157. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1829, 2 mo. 20.—I suppose —— may now be on their way for Ireland. I shall sometimes think of them with affectionate solicitude ; for after being made willing to resign our beloved friends, whoever they are, to these arduous engagements, or even enabled to commend them to holy care and keeping, there still is room for secret prayer,—that sacred duty of such extensive and universal obligation, as to be appropriate to all conditions, and in all times, places, and circumstances. I think I am not setting up

too high a mark—attainment is another thing—yet if we feel something of a pressing after, let us not be discouraged.

Are thou and thy long-loved partner passing the winter pretty much alone, or are any of your grandchildren with you? I also am a father and grandfather, and am so well pleased with the relationship, that I seldom find myself happier than with a child and its comparative innocence in my arms, or in beholding infant loveliness sleeping on its mother's lap. Like balm in a wound, these objects sometimes soothe me;—like oil upon the wave, they often calm; and I could really almost fancy myself the better for being thus brought into contact with something so intimately connected with the kingdom of heaven.

No. 158. TO RICHARD COCKIN.

1829, 3 *mo.* 10.—I scarcely need tell thee that since we last met, many humiliations both of a public and private nature have befallen our dear little religious community; and may we not add, our beloved country too?—so much so, that the present appears to be a cloudy and portentous day, and probably may have occasioned each of us many an anxious thought. But after all these forebodings and agitations, what can we do better than abide patiently in our respective allotments, waiting as resignedly as we can the event of these turnings and shakings, whatever that event may be? for I think it is said in holy writ, “How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!” and that whilst abiding in them, neither enchantment nor divination shall prevail against him. If I

infer anything from this language as applicable to us, it is the encouragement and desirableness of Friends keeping themselves as quiet as possible, and out of the spirit of party, however they may be urged to join in it, and whether it assume a religious or a political character, or both combined. The strict neutrality which in extreme cases a consistency with our principles obliges us to observe, makes it in my judgment a part of the same consistency to forbear meddling with the very beginnings of contention.

But though I have thus touched upon it, it is not my intention to dwell long upon this or any other gloomy subject, though materials we both know are not wanting. But I am at present inclined to turn aside from them all, for the sake of indulging the brighter and more cheering consideration, that amidst all the commotions and vicissitudes of this lower world, the Lord of the universe is gracious, omnipotent, and changes not. From the beginning of time He has caused his sun to shine on the evil and on the good; and his rain to descend on the just and unjust. Whilst to those who in sincerity of heart endeavour to please and to serve Him, He is good, supremely good; yea, may we not say in a superlative degree, not only by favouring them with inward peace in seasons of outward trouble, but even by protecting their persons and preserving their lives in the midst of numerous and imminent perils. May we then, my beloved friend, as both Scripture and experience warrant us in doing, still trust in the Lord, encouraging others by our example to the same confidence in Him!

I have this winter had pretty good health, which, in the latter stages of life, is a great privilege. It is truly remarkable how at one time the body appears to help the

mind to bear its exercises, whilst at another, the mind seems to sustain the infirmities of a failing body : so wonderful is the divine economy respecting frail and feeble man. For through whatever medium we are comforted or assisted, it is still the Lord's doing, and is sometimes marvellous in our eyes.

No. 159. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

1829, 4 mo. 25.—It is in proportion as they are in some way or other interesting that all our communications written or oral, longer or shorter, on ordinary or religious subjects, derive their principal value. And whilst we should not attempt to limit what must from various causes ever be variable, yet I think it is pretty clear that length and strength, either in speaking or writing, are not exactly synonymous. Has not our attention been sometimes ready to groan or to sleep under the multitude of words, whilst at others, words fitly spoken, though many in number, have been heard with satisfaction and benefit? So long then as sense accompanies sound on common occasions, and weight supports measure on graver ones, we listen willingly ; but when either of these fails, weariness ensues.

Of individuals sliding or bewildered I endeavour to speak, if at all, with much reserve ; but in the case of a fallen brother or sister whom I have loved, I become as it were dumb with silence ; and if I can avoid it, neither mention nor record their name, which, however, does not exclude them from my thoughts, or perhaps from something more.

No. 160. To J. J. GURNEY.

1829, 6 *mo.* 23.—I have long been acquainted with humiliations and baptisms ; but I do not remember in the same space of time so many, so peculiar, and so deep, as those which have arisen out of the events of latter days. And as there is no rising above them by our own strength, the wisest and safest course appears to be that of submission to the rod and Him that shaketh it ; humbling ourselves individually and collectively under his mighty hand, until He may be pleased to raise up, and cause us again to live with acceptance in his holy sight ; giving us the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

I would call upon every one who is able and willing, to join me in secret and silent, rather than vocal or public lamentations, perhaps somewhat resembling that mentioned by the prophet Zechariah, xii. 10, to the end. As we are thus willing to go down again into the low valley, the Lord may condescend again to plead with us there, and cause the blessed fountain, so beautifully spoken of in the first verse of the succeeding chapter, “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness”—to be afresh opened for our purification and sanctification, and may we not add, for our unspeakable consolation also.

No. 161. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1829, 8 *mo.* 28.—I think there may be more good than harm, when we are at liberty so to do, in describing to a fellow-traveller simply and without murmuring, the occasional withdrawals from our minds of that which is most dear to us. I am sure there are seasons (and I say it without repining) when not even the most precious promises of Scripture—upon which at such times I can perhaps take no hold, and therefore, when not even these, sustain my mind equally with those more affecting descriptions of suffering, bodily and mental, given either as their own experience or that of their companions, by many of the inspired writers. Job and Daniel abound in these, descriptions : the prayers, confessions, and even complaints of Elijah, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, and Jonah, are also of the same character ; and I cannot doubt but that the second chapter of the book bearing the name of the latter prophet has many a time, in different ages and generations of men, been availingly brought to the remembrance of the afflicted under their deepest conflicts ; for by these only and in such circumstances could the contents of this remarkable chapter perhaps be fully understood and appreciated. Neither must we, whilst on this interesting topic, forget the expression of the blessed Redeemer, “ My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ? ” nor the remarkable language of many who with so much energy and accuracy foretold his humiliation and sufferings ; so that, on the whole, I think it will appear that the duties of prayer, perseverance, and patience, no less than those of faith,

hope, and charity, are recommended to us by a cloud of witnesses.

I have not seen the book thou mentionest by Jonathan Dymond, but I have read several pretty descriptions of the Millennium, a subject which I generally lay down with the volume ; for though it is quite delightful but to dream of such a thing, yet the realities which surround us are of so opposite a character, that it seems no less tantalizing to dwell upon the character, beautiful as it is. Perhaps the nearest approach, which as individuals we can expect to make to this most desirable state, may be found in that rest to the soul, which results from taking Christ's yoke upon us, and being obedient to our God.

29th.—The crops of corn in this neighbourhood are, I believe, of an average quantity and excellent quality. The progress of the harvest is, however, much retarded by the state of the weather. This, by an agricultural paper which I see, is stated to be the case generally throughout the island ; and yet these reporters say that the quality of the grain is not much, if at all, deteriorated by the heavy rains, which is rather new doctrine to an old farmer. The high and cold winds are certainly much in its favour by checking germination ; but the storms in divers places have done much injury by beating out the grain ; in some instances, I am credibly informed, as clean as if it had been threshed. That our *all* is dependent upon an overruling Providence will be generally acknowledged ; but how far the weather, as a second cause, is in his hand made the agent of plenty or scarcity, is perhaps too little considered. Were farmers seriously to reflect that they have no control over cold or heat, that they cannot command a ray of sunshine or a drop of rain, and that by a

certain adjustment of all, their hopes are realized or disappointed; such thoughts might make some of them better philosophers and no worse men.

So far as my own observation goes, the weather most [hurtful] to corn in the field, is that which is at once moist, warm, and still; for under this circumstance, whether the sun shines at intervals or not, vegetation will proceed. The harvest of 1816 partook so much of this character, as fully to convince me, that, had the same kind of weather continued but one week longer, the corn then abroad standing or cut,—which was a large proportion of it,—could not possibly have been saved. But just at the crisis, when all seemed going to ruin, and the most active farmer could do no more than look on and behold the wreck; in this state of things, the only change of weather that could have been availing was in mercy permitted: a high, cold, and penetrating wind arose, and in the course of a few hours quite changed the face of things; the farmers exerted themselves, and though considerable damage was sustained, the threatened scarcity was averted. I desire never to forget this impressive instance of providential correction and kindness, as manifested in such rapid succession through the medium of the elements.

No. 162. To ELIZABETH (JOSEPH) FRY.

1829, 9 mo. 21.—I may just say to thee, my valued friend, that my religious course has at different times, and under different circumstances, led me into a close acquaintance, both with the consolations and humiliations

described in that remarkable portion of Scripture, the fifty-first chapter of Isaiah.

Some few times I have been enabled rejoicingly to adopt the glowing language of the third and eleventh verses: "For the Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord: joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." Whilst, at other times, I have had to bend under many of the afflictive dispensations spoken of from the seventeenth verse to the end.

I mention these things from an apprehension that our experience of them may be somewhat alike; and that thou as well as myself hast experienced, dost experience, and mayst perhaps have still further to experience their applicability. And here I can scarcely forbear exclaiming, I trust in some degree of the spirit of prayer, O that, through inscrutable wisdom and adorable mercy, thou mayst live to witness the fulfilment of the precious promise contained in the twenty-first and twenty-second verses!—"Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine: Thus saith thy Lord the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again." On the very solemn contents of the twenty-third and last verse of the chapter before us, it be-

comes us to speak with caution and deep humility; yet, even under these considerations, I am inclined to express my full belief, that there are cases in which, not only as it respects the oppressed but the oppressor, it has been and may be awfully fulfilled.

No. 163. To J. J. GURNEY.

1829, 10 mo. 27.—I perceive by thy letter that our feelings and views on certain weighty points continue to agree; and though this need not surprise us, it is very agreeable to discover. On the low state of our little society, on the alternate hopes and fears respecting it—hope still predominating—our thoughts are the same.

To thy remarks on the *all-sufficiency* of our blessed Advocate and Mediator—I think I could subscribe word for word. As perhaps there never was a time in my long life when I stood more in need of *such a Saviour*, so I think there never was a period in which I more highly appreciated this most precious gift of God; so that I am enabled to lift up my head in hope, even under a deep and abiding sense of the greatest unworthiness.

No. 164. To SARAH SQUIRE.

1829, 11 mo. 6.—Having reason to suppose that, after a pretty long absence and many arduous engagements, thou hast returned to thy dear family, and to a home which I hope thou wilt find a peaceful one, I am desirous of affectionately congratulating thee on so interesting an occa-

sion ; at the same time desiring that grace, mercy, and peace may be thy companions through every change of situation and circumstance with which the present eventful scene abounds.

Yet, as these necessities commonly, and perhaps necessarily, produce their corresponding changes in our feelings and experience, I have thought that, even when we are peaceful, we may also be poor, seeing that peace and poverty, whether inward or outward, are by no means incompatible ; and therefore, if, after being clothed and replenished for the sake of others, we should have our seasons of stripping and emptiness, let us not be too much discouraged ; for all this may be unattended by anything like condemnation, and only amount to the quiet privation to which I have alluded ; under which, if we can but perceive the spirit of grace and of supplication in the gentlest breathings for a patient and resigned mind, we have cause to be thankful, and have nothing to fear. Our gracious Lord and Master, as they cast all their care upon Him and abide in humility before Him, will in his own time and way remember the poorest of his children and servants, and, as I believe thou hast known, cast up a way for them where they have seen no way ; making, at seasons, even the desert to blossom as the rose ; turning the wilderness into a pool of water, and the dry land into springs of water, to give drink to his people, his chosen.

No. 165. To J. J. GURNEY.

1829, 11 *mo.* 27.—I am recommended by my medical attendant to keep very much within doors, which I have so far complied with as to have been but once at meeting, and of course denied myself the short rides and walks which I had usually been accustomed to take almost every fine day.

If conversation flags, or we are tired of reading, it is but sending for two or three of J.'s little children, who quickly restore animation. In the present era of speculation and refinement, when much is said of the march of intellect and the wonders in its train, we have, amongst other discoveries, been told of the transfusion of blood from those who have it to spare into the veins of such as are deficient in the needful supply of this vital flame. May it not be on a similar principle, that the smiles and the cheerfulness of infancy are found to impart a portion of its pure and exuberant spirits, into the torpid, weary, or afflicted bosom of more advanced life? To this effect has sung a poet of some talent and much sensibility, in this pretty stanza :

“ Sweet infancy ! Oh, what a heart
 Must he that could injure thee bear ;
 Even anguish forgetteth its smart,
 When thou, busy prattler, art near.”

To resume a seriousness from which it does not become me long to depart, I may tell thee, that, tranquil as the present tenor of my external condition might appear to a passing observer, not such altogether is my mental course.

On the contrary, ups and downs, and a variety of changes find their way into my retreat, secluded as it is. Thus, whilst I might now and then almost adopt the two first lines of a beautiful hymn :

“ A glance from heaven, with sweet effect,
Sometimes my pensive spirit cheers :”

Yet, like the writer of this hymn, I perhaps soon find myself involved in an opposite experience, either as being more necessary for my own refinement, or more in affinity with the darkness and suffering, which, on most parts of this low and probationary region, though certainly with some variation, seems to be the general state of the spiritual atmosphere.

After saying this, it would be the depth of ingratitude not to acknowledge, that, during my present confinement I have been favoured, and I hope I do not deceive myself, with the clearest and most satisfactory view of the Christian's faith and hope, or rather of his salvation, that I ever witnessed—a salvation which has appeared to me to consist in the forgiveness of sins, through the atoning sacrifice of the blood of Christ—in reconciliation with the Father, by the mediation and intercession of the same blessed Advocate and Redeemer—in *power* over all the power of our souls' enemies; and finally, as the consequence and consummation of all these, in the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come; even of a city that hath foundations—an inheritance, eternal, incorruptible, that fadeth not away. Although I believe thou art much conversant on this deeply interesting subject, yet I do not think I could give thee an adequate

idea of the preciousness of those moments, wherein light shone upon my tabernacle; nor how great my distress, when, as in Peter's vision, the sheet was taken up again from whence it came.

The longer I live, the more of a learner I find myself; yet, so far as my experience goes, it does seem as if changes, comparable to being emptied from vessel to vessel, or even the same vessel alternately filled and emptied, were needful to keep some of us at least sufficiently humble and dependent; by showing us, with an unquestionable degree of evidence, what inestimable treasure may be contained in our earthen vessels when grace abounds; and what total vanity takes place when it is wanting;—truths, which, had we no changes, and were the stream of time always to run smoothly, we should be unwilling to believe or apt to forget. If this conclusion be correct, as I think it is, then may we not indeed say, that—

“ Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer;
Trials bring me to his feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there.”

Welcome, therefore, tribulation, saith the spirit; but, alas! for another part, how weak!

No. 166. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1830, 2 mo. 6.—I am desirous of acknowledging thy brotherly kindness, as conveyed to me by thy letter of the 3rd, particularly in the account thou hast given me of thy

dear son and daughter's extensive, and, were it not that I wish to avoid any expression that might seem connected with hard service, I might perhaps have called them arduous religious prospects. Under a persuasion, however, of the transcendent kindness of the Master, whom they are endeavouring to serve, I would do neither more nor less than encourage them to abide in Him who has heretofore helped them, and in whom they have on the present occasion been enabled to trust.

I sometimes think it is a great favour when the Lord condescends to own us in any way, whether in correction, command, or his sweet consolations ; as each of these tends to afford the reasonable presumption, that we are not so displeasing in his holy sight as to be cast off or forgotten by Him. This brings to my remembrance the circumstance of a stranger Friend, a minister, who many years since in our little meeting introduced the scriptural story of Manoah and his wife, as related in Judges, xiii. ; and dwelt particularly on the twenty-second and twenty-third verses, in support of the view I have just taken.

Though imagination has often caused me sorrow, I have for once had to rejoice in that it only conjured up a groundless fear of having given religious or mental pain, by indulging too great a latitude of expression on some of those secret things, which, if discussed at all, it should be with much caution. When doubts and discouragements press heavily, as I suppose they may at times upon most of us, and lead me to turn the leaves of past experience over, though on this review I have generally stood pretty well acquitted of wilful disobedience ; yet, when I come to the item of watchfulness against a restless and bewildering imagination, I have been ready to tremble, and

to conclude that few, if any, are equally tried in the same way.

One of our poets has written elaborately on "the Pleasures of Imagination." If this were given me as a theme on which I must either speak or write, I really think I could dwell only on its mischiefs and its miseries, wherein I became in early life so deeply involved, that I am now, perhaps, too sensitive on this quarter; for such is my dread of being again ensnared by the delusions and deceitfulness of my own heart, that I think it is quite possible I may sometimes be endangered by an over anxiety to escape: thus I perhaps may be too scrupulous in conversation, too timid in writing, and too much alarmed (for I really sometimes am alarmed) in the gallery. Now all this is not the true medium, and disturbs that equanimity which it is so desirable to possess. But seeing it is so, and that I am thus weak, is it not possible that this infirmity, in conjunction with not being aware of a command or warrant to launch into deep water, may be a principal cause why, in the article of preaching, I am kept so near the shore? Be this as it may, I feel, and hope ever to feel, that to grace or mercy, in bearing and forbearing, I am an infinite debtor.

No. 167. TO SARAH SQUIRE.

1830, 2 mo. 18.—How precious is hope! so much so, that I think the apostle has somewhere said, we are saved by it. Indeed, it seems the happy medium between "the vast extremes of happiness and woe," which, in our present probationary state we can bear better than either

of them. Shall I give thee the following extract, from a letter of Samuel Fothergill's, as what may probably be no very inapt description of the state of some other minds?

“ I have nothing to glory in, and am weak : I have known strength. I am foolish ; I have been helped with wisdom. I am poor ; but I have been enriched. The rod I have often merited ; the staff hath often been revealed. I have nothing ; I am nothing : let the gain and praise be consecrated to Him, whose is the fulness of all wisdom, riches, and strength.”

No. 168. To CATHERINE FOSTER.

1830, 3 *mo.* 5.—I am inclined to request thy attention with that of thy long-loved partner, my old and valued friend, to a few thoughts and observations, which, in connexion with you, have lately arisen and continue to attend my mind.

That self-examination is an important duty I am persuaded we shall all admit, and that the oftener we enter into it, the more we shall be humbled, and the more earnestly we shall seek, and consequently find, an establishment on the Rock of Ages. And perhaps it is in union with another sentiment, founded on experience, that, by accepting our daily mingled portion of good and ill, as it may in inscrutable wisdom be handed us, we shall often find if received with acquiescence, that, at the bottom of our bitterest cup there lies a drop of the sweetest mercy ; or, to change the figure,—peace not unfrequently succeeds to conflict, as calm after a storm.

These reflections, though not entirely new to me, have

been afresh excited during a season of exercise, not only on account of my own imbecility and unworthiness, but in the consideration also of the low and stripped state of our little religious society, and the smallness of meetings, both in this county and the borders of some neighbouring ones, for a great distance round my habitation.

Under this discouraging view I was somewhat relieved by the recollection of Gideon's humiliation and acknowledgments, when called from a low estate into the Lord's service; and I was enabled, in some degree, to appreciate these remarkable expressions of his: "Oh, my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold! my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." Equally moving and contrite was another of his diffident queries: "Oh, my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?" A language I have been ready to think so appropriate to our own times and circumstances, that it may not improbably have passed through many minds. And yet, when we consider the state of Israel in Gideon's day, and mark the successful result of his simple obedience, is it not enough to encourage the most fearful and feeble to endeavour after faithfulness; and, without aiming at his distinguished eminence, to do or to suffer whatever may be allotted them in their greatly diversified situations and callings? And thus, perhaps, every one capable of spiritual feeling, whether strong or weak, old or young, might, either by private supplication or public exercise, be brought to the help of the Lord against the mighty opposers of his truth and righteousness.

In this train of thought my mind was somewhat unexpectedly turned, by an easy and not very unnatural transition, to the remembrance of my feelings in your

little meeting, one of the few times in which I have ventured to open my mouth in it as a minister, when this short passage of Scripture occurred to me in a lively manner; and the recurrence of it has been accompanied with a degree of the same animating influence, even at this distance of time, viz. "Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy."

That our dear departed friend and sister, E. S., was in her life one of these few names, we shall have little hesitation in believing. But, whilst we can thus hope for the dead, who we trust have died in the Lord, we sometimes find it difficult, encompassed as we are with infirmities, to hope and trust sufficiently for ourselves: finding the warfare within and without,—a warfare that, perhaps, will end only with life,—to press so closely upon us, that the utmost we can do, after all former experience, is to pray that the door of the bride-chamber may not at last be closed against us; but that, through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, our immortal spirits, when freed from these tabernacles of earth, may be admitted into the least or lowest mansion, (if there are such distinctions in heaven,) prepared for the righteous! And my chief aim in all that I have said, is to encourage you, my dear friends, as I desire myself to be enabled, under all our weaknesses of body or mind, thus to be exercised before our gracious Creator and Preserver, who will not reject the petitions of the humble. In this holy faith and confidence it undoubtedly was that the Psalmist thus expressed himself: "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." I think you might also, derive comfort from a perusal of the seventy-first

Psalm, parts of which seem peculiarly appropriate to the aged.

Being myself lately turned seventy, and feeling as I do the aggressions of time upon my constitution, I am ready to conclude, that, at a considerably higher date of years, you may be sensible of these inroads in a still greater degree. We have, indeed, occasion for each other's sympathy and best desires; and whilst I assure you that, rare as is our outward intercourse, you are not in this way forgotten by me, I would bespeak your remembrance, whenever you may be enabled to lift up your hearts on your own account, at the footstool of mercy.

No. 169. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

1830, 3 *mo.* 26.—What a miracle to man is man! is an observation verified both physically and intellectually, not only in his curious formation, but in the great variety of person and character which we daily behold. Nor is even this more surprising than the changes, bodily and mental, of which an individual under different circumstances is found to be susceptible—from health to sickness, joy to sorrow, a high elevation of thought and of feeling to a state of depression and anguish, which I think the Psalmist has compared to the very pains of hell.

There is something in this capacity with which we are endowed for undergoing great and almost countless changes; that, abstractedly considered, sets my poor reason at a distance; and of which, perhaps, thou canst not give a much better account. Must we not, then, in all humility and reverence, conclude that man, the noblest in-

habitant of the Lord's earth, came from his Creator's hand a miracle to himself? and that, as respects both body and mind, he is indeed fearfully constituted and wonderfully made?

I enjoy, as thou hast supposed, the return of another spring with its various beauties, of which, though in a comparatively low and flat situation, we have now for some weeks had many pleasant harbingers; unfolding to us daily charms, which winter had till lately silenced or concealed. The flowers of the season now look very bright. The lambs play; the rook, the wood-pigeon, and many smaller birds give us their different notes, and are building or preparing to build within sight of our windows. This, even in life's decline, I consider a privilege to my children, my grand-children, and myself, who, although with different eyes, and perhaps different emotions, yet each in our own way, are, I hope, allowably pleased with objects so animating, and,—as the works of infinite goodness and power—so perfect and so lovely.

170. TO RICHARD COCKIN.

1830, 4 mo. 22.—That sufferings abound in the world, in the church, and in private life, neither of us has need to be reminded; and therefore, though it is well to guard every point, I have thought thy caution, that, “elderly persons should beware of supineness,” may not be so applicable to thee and me, as the danger of a contrary extreme from undue discouragement, because of the trials that surround us, and of fainting,—not sleeping,—under the burdens of our day.

For myself, I may acknowledge that herein consists my greatest apprehension of falling short in the path of duty ; so much so, that sometimes, when hard pressed from without, and a sense of divine support low within, I fly to the Scriptures for refuge, and am at seasons not a little comforted and strengthened by so doing. On one of these occasions lately, my grain of faith and hope was increased, by a clearer view of the parable of the unjust Judge and the importunate Widow, than I remember to have had before. If a wicked mortal, from no worthier a motive than his own ease, would grant a petition, how much more probable, even to the eye of reason, is it, that a Being, whose very essence is love, and who is clothed with every perfect and adorable attribute, should listen to the prayers of his poor and afflicted children, and, in the language of the text, avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto Him ; though, to their fearful hearts, He may seem at times to delay his coming, and bear long with them.

Innumerable are the passages, both in the Old and New Testament Scriptures, from which the Christian traveller may derive comfort and support, in low and trying seasons ; especially from such precious promises and assurances of the blessed Redeemer as these ; “ Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (Luke, xiii. 32.) “ Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in me.” (John, xiv. 1.) And again, “ Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John, xiv. 27.) Indeed the whole of this chapter is a series of encouragement, instruction, and comfort.

What a treasure, then, is the Bible ! This is so much my real sentiment, that I am not ashamed to own to thee,

that in these seasons of obscurity and temptation, which may perhaps assail many of us, when invisible things appear remote, and are seen as through a glass darkly ;—in some of these times of sore buffetting and trial, I have been ready to lay my hands upon the sacred volume, and exclaim, Well ! here is something tangible, even to my senses, to be at once seen, felt, and understood ; containing narrative, doctrine, and truth ; and altogether forming such a degree of evidence of its divine authority, and of the eternal realities whereof it assures us, as I trust neither the sophistry of man nor the malice of the devil shall ever prevail with me to doubt, still less to renounce and disbelieve.

In whatever we two may err, I believe we shall not be in much hazard of seeking repose upon the rolling and uneasy pillow of this world, to which I sometimes think almost every day adds a thorn. Can we, however favoured and privileged may be our lot, rest in such a situation ? May we be equally preserved from relaxing in our warfare, and from fainting before it be accomplished ! and then, through Him who forgiveth our sins, and giveth us the victory, even our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall experience a blessed and glorious exchange.

I do not write thus, my dear friend, to instruct thee in these things, with which I know thou art well acquainted ; but I have thought it may not be amiss for us now and then to remind ourselves, and each other, of truth so important. By thus comparing our experience, we may also, to use the language of a poet, be instrumental “in girding up each other to the race divine ;” and this might be a kindness to some of us, in whom nature grows feeble, and to whom the end of this race must be fast approaching.

No. 171. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

Leiston, 1830, 6 *mo.* 2.—On approaching the bed of my dear Lydia I found that her disorder had made such progress, as to disqualify her for converse; so that, although sensible and apparently pleased to see me, she could only reply to my query, if her mind was peaceful, by a whisper in the affirmative, and in about three hours she expired. This is quite a stroke upon us. Her poor husband, who considers himself to have been very happily married, suffers deeply and internally, whilst I am able to offer him very little consolation.

How true it is, that our fairest theories, or even our former experience, avail us little, in the extremity of sorrow, which, like a tempest or a torrent, carries them before it. Affliction was no new thing to me. I had lost parents, wife, children, and many friends of different ages; yet the present visitation found me encompassed by human infirmity; it came over me somewhat like the strength of a giant upon the weakness of a child; and had not those fountains been opened, which seem to have been mercifully designed for the relief of a labouring breast, perhaps, old and feeble as I am, I might scarcely have been able to sustain the load.

As it is, however, I am as well as it is at all reasonable to expect, and probably as is good for me; though I always expect to feel a void, in addition to many former ones, which nothing earthly can fill; and as my dear child was beloved by those who knew her, I doubt not but divers will participate with me in this state of bereavement. But, amidst all our tribulation, some of us are enabled to

rejoice, in the precious hope that another prepared spirit, is, through the merits of its Redeemer and the mercy of its God, entered into everlasting rest.

The last portion of Scripture which Lydia heard, I think on the day previous to her departure, was the two last chapters in the Revelations, which, as they are very beautiful, so I have also thought they might not be inappropriate to such a scene in such an hour.

A certain learned and pious writer has been very severe upon those who die of what he designates a broken heart, charging them with pride and self-will, if not with madness. But so did not *He* who took upon him our nature, became a man of sorrows, and wept for his friend. Estimable as I hold those sublime and amiable virtues, patience and resignation, I would rather weep incessantly over the graves of such as honest grief, "which comes at God's command," had accelerated thither, than load their memory with reproach. I do not mean by this an apology for giving way to immoderate sorrow; on the contrary, I believe we ought to do all we can to suppress it, and even to pray for due submission. And it may, perhaps, afford thee some satisfaction to know, that, at the present juncture, I am able, though with tender emotion, to kiss the rod, and bless the hand that hath appointed it.

No. 172. To JOSEPH GURNEY.

1830, 6 mo. 26.—It is almost with *weeping*, that I express my apprehension that each of us may, by nature, be rather too sensitive for our peace; yet who would wish for apathy?

I think I understand pretty well, not only the "mist," which thou sayest great excitement raises around thee ; but I find that it also in no inconsiderable degree, enervates and disinclines me for active engagements, and particularly for writing ; so that, whilst I can thankfully rejoice in the mental support vouchsafed to us both under recent and existing trials, I can readily believe that there is another part in us, which, like a leaf shaken by the wind, is really feeble and tremulous. An apostle has told us that when he was weak then he was strong ; and may not the converse of his experience be equally true ?

Of *our* dear children, both of those departed and such as are yet spared to us, I frequently think ; and since my late bereavement of one very tenderly beloved, I have been struck with the different sensations which these remembrances of the two classes excite in my mind. For those who have died in the hope of mercy and forgiveness through a blessed Mediator I feel a congratulation, comparable to joy unspeakable, on account of their being now set free from the dangers of temptation, the recurrence of sorrows, or the frequent visits of bodily and mental pain, to which humanity is liable. Whilst for those who with myself yet remain in a state of conflict and probation, whatever may be their condition or their prospects, there is not the same assurance of safety, the same completeness of satisfaction : they are as on a sea of glass, and if I venture to rejoice over them at all, it is with mingled emotion.

No. 173. To J. J. GURNEY.

Leiston, 1830, 7 mo. 8.—I reached this widowed spot about half-past ten on the evening after we parted. The morning's dawn did not bring with it the joy that succeeds a night of anxiety. It being meeting-day I went where, though surrounded principally by the poor of this world, yet, as I believe there are some amongst them rich in faith, I was enabled once more to rise out of depression into a little fresh renewal of faith and hope, under the impression, that, though there appear in most places to be few that believe the Gospel, and still fewer who act up to their knowledge and belief, yet that there are a few scattered up and down as one of a tribe and two of a family, both rich and poor, who do thus believe and are endeavouring to obey; and that, though they may often have to dwell solitarily, both outwardly and inwardly, yet that they are not alone, because their Saviour is with them. He is with them, whether they are always sensible of his presence or not, in heights and in depths, in prosperity and adversity, in joy and in sorrow; yea, though they may at times have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, (for we are in deaths oft, saith the apostle,) they need fear no evil, because He is their omnipresent God, and because his rod and his staff are ever near to comfort and uphold them. So that, without appropriating all this preciousness as that of my own immediate experience, the bare contemplation of it so far restored me to myself, as to make me glad I had been to meeting, and has caused me to remember the example of David, who, in times of difficulty and discouragement,

ment, was wont to repair to the sanctuary, where he often found his doubts and his fears dissipated, his hopes revived, and the obscurity which hung upon his path changed into brightness and serenity. What a favour it is, my beloved friend, as thou well knowest, involved as we sometimes are, to approximate, ever so remotely, to these blessed attainments and experiences. Let us not seek great things for ourselves of any kind; but let us desire with all fervency, for ourselves and for each other, the blessing of sure preservation!

No. 174. To J. J. GURNEY.

1830, 9 mo. 24.—There is one thing in thy letter which really cheers me; it is the use thou art endeavouring to make of the present permitted dispensation of an over-ruling and all-wise Providence; of whose unremitting and universal attention to mundane affairs, however mysterious in its operations, or however difficult we may sometimes find it to submit to its government, yet of such a government I am, both by my understanding, my feelings, and my experience, most fully persuaded.

I was both much pleased and satisfied with the concluding remarks of that part of thy letter which alludes to the imbecility and nothingness of man. I well know that those who plead for his self-sufficiency deride and oppose this humiliating doctrine; still I firmly believe it; and sometimes, in thought at least, bring against these minute philosophers and imperfect religionists, these words of the hymn.

“A fever or a blow may shake
Our wisdom’s boasted rule,
And of the brightest genius make
A madman or a fool.”

Now, who is it that prevents or controls the effects of the fever or the blow? what hand unseen could in a moment resume our spirit and our breath; consign our bodies to the dust, and send our souls, naked and trembling, before the judgment-seat of Christ? Or, on the brighter side of the question, what power is it that defends and preserves us amidst innumerable perils, robs death of its sting, and the grave of its victory; making objects the most appalling in their nature, welcome in all their humiliations?

I would only show, if I understand thee, how far we are agreed in our views of a superintending and particular Providence, (see better authority than ours, in the ninety-first Psalm, and in the ever-memorable sermon of our blessed Redeemer on the Mount,) contingent rather than fixed or necessary, which I think keeps us clear of a difficulty, that I am always very desirous of avoiding.

Farewell, dear J. and M. May grace, mercy, and peace attend you! What a comprehensive benediction! yet I think I feel it.

No. 175. To PETER BEDFORD.

1830, 9 mo. 27.—The sorrows of the widow and the orphan—the difficulties which some have to encounter in their struggles with the world—the dereliction of others whose early days promised better things—the removal by death or otherwise of several hopeful young people, cannot and ought not to be viewed by me with indifference; on the contrary, they sometimes affect me in a manner which I cannot easily describe.

In the superintendence of infinite and inscrutable wisdom, I hope I am, in my lowest seasons, a *firm* believer; and in my deepest afflictions I trust it is my endeavour to cling to the Rock of Ages, as my only refuge, my only hope of glory. (See a beautiful and excellent hymn, entitled "Christ the Rock of Ages," in Gurney's collection.) May nothing, according to the apostle's persuasion, ever be able to separate *us* from this love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! (Rom. viii. 38, 39.)

No. 176. To JOSEPH* GURNEY.*

1830, 9 mo. 30.—In answer to thy inquiry after my health, I may acknowledge, and I trust with some degree of thankfulness, that it is good; and as to the state of my mind, with due allowance for what I suppose we shall always have to make allowance, as "the evils sufficient for the day," I perhaps have as little reason to complain. I have no doubt but we shall individually agree in the sentiment, to which thou hast alluded, that, were it not for the belief "in a joyful resurrection," how poor would this world be! May we not devoutly say, "Thanks be unto God," who hath provided us with a means adequate to our wants, in the gift of his Holy Spirit; though, according to the highest authority, all the benefits we can enjoy on

* This appears to have been his last letter to his intimate, long-loved, and justly valued friend, Joseph Gurney, of Lakenham, near Norwich, who died very suddenly on the 25th of the 12th month following, in his seventy-fourth year; a minister justly esteemed among friends; a man of great integrity and self-examination; and much attached to our Christian principles.

earth will be mingled with "persecutions also ;" and again, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Thus said the blessed Redeemer, at an advanced and very important period of his mission to fallen man ; and being so near it, I will just add, that the reading of the succeeding chapter, the seventeenth (of John,) generally inspires me with a feeling peculiar to the occasion, which I will not, and I believe to thee I need not, attempt to describe.

I am glad that such good accounts can be given of the labours of the Committee of the Yearly Meeting, as it seems have reached us both from different quarters. So far as it has already proceeded, this measure of the Yearly Meeting appears to have been favoured, perhaps in few things more than by increasing the knowledge and the love of the visitors and visited, towards each other. This must be good, and may we not hope that, like bread cast upon the waters, it will be productive of benefits, some of which may not be fully elicited until many days hence.

No. 177. To J. J. GURNEY.

1830, 12 *mo.* 6.—I was pleased with thy sketch of the grand scenery of some of our northern counties, and thy connecting it with a line from a beautiful and devout passage of my favourite Cowper, made it not the less acceptable. There, too, it seems, thou hast found a poet's corner, which, surrounded by mountain, lake, and river, I should, as a lover of nature, greatly prefer to a garret, or even a parlour, in the crowded city full. In many respects, I think such a situation must be very favourable to

literary pursuits, if, by thus abstracting us from practical subjects, it does not too much favour dreaming.

It might be well, however, that thou wast cast there, and a part of thy proper business that thou hadst an opportunity of endeavouring to rouse a certain celebrated author from some of his reveries, into which, whilst I acknowledge his talents, I think he has proved himself liable to fall, perhaps both in prose and in verse. To some such cause may probably be attributed his classing Friends, as I think he has done, in his "Book of the Church" among the crazier sects. If neither to slumber nor to absence, to what must we ascribe this strange expression? I can find only one other solution—that the discipline of our Society, which by way of distinction we may call its morality, and for which he gives us high credit, was intelligible to his understanding; whilst the more spiritual parts of our profession, or its divinity, may have been as little comprehended by him as was the worship of the early Christians by those who called it heresy, or the reasoning of the apostle before Agrippa, when Festus thought him mad.

7th.—How desirable is it for us at all times, but particularly under existing circumstances, to keep our hold, as much as possible, on such sustaining portions of Scripture as this: "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world;" and it is worthy of observation how much they abound, both in the Old and New Testament, especially in the Psalms. David was often in danger and in trouble; and in his deepest conflicts he endeavoured to support his faith by considerations of the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Lord. He has described these exercises under various forms of expression, which seem to be summed up in one brief sentence: "What time I am

afraid, I will trust in Thee." May we, my dear friend, in all our difficulties, be able to center here !

I can scarcely quit this ground without making a short remark upon the extraordinary scenes, that, within these few latter years, have been passing before our eyes in the higher circles of human society. How, indeed, have the mighty fallen !—some into their graves, others into exile ; whilst not a few of various nations have become the sport of popular vicissitude, and, in proportion to the height of their previous elevation, have, as I think Dr. Johnson expresses it, been hurled from the very pinnacle of their possessions and desires, with louder ruin, to the gulfs below.

But when thus indulging in freedom to a friend, I am sometimes, as at present, jealous, lest I should assume a tone that does not become me, and thereby any should be led to think more highly of me than they ought to think ; which truly they must do, if they think me anything of myself that is good : in this sense, abstractedly, I am nothing. And not so much that I may appear humble, as that thou mayst not be mistaken, to thee I will say, that it would afford me a satisfaction, which, in this life I scarcely hope to possess, if negation were all : but, alas ! for my deeper and more positive abasement, I have to confess, that, in the time of ignorance, I classed among the chief of sinners, and, since my illumination, I have never been able to rise higher than the weakest and most unworthy of believers. Yes ; such, my dear friend, have been and are my humiliations, that, in truth and soberness, I believe this to be a faithful portrait. Yet, oh ! the forgiveness of sins, through the sufferings and mediation of Jesus Christ ! Having received a glimpse of this mercy, I faint not, but with feeble and faltering steps endeavour

to press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

No. 178. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

1830, 12 *mo.* 14.—Is not the destroyer gone forth, [aluding to incendiary fires, then prevailing to an alarming extent in some of the agricultural counties,] and does he not, though not in the form of pestilence, yet in a very terrific shape, walk in darkness? Happy will it be for those whose doors have received the mark of protection; but who dare appropriate to themselves even the hope of such a distinguished mercy! For myself, I am free to acknowledge that I find it easier to believe than to hope. I have no doubt of the power, wisdom, and mercy of the Creator and Governor of the world, God over all, blessed for ever. I firmly believe; but in the face of such unworthiness, to hope, seems to require a deeper exercise of faith. And yet can we expect too much, so long as we are dedicated and obedient, from Him who has promised the forgiveness of sins; and whose beloved Son has given us an assurance, sealed with his own blood, of immortality and eternal life, in a future and a better world?

Here then, my beloved friend, kept from soaring by fear, and from sinking by hope, let us take our stand; diligently watching the eye of our gracious Lord and Master; and when the signal is given, taking a step in the ability which He may be pleased to afford; and let us also try to believe that this will be equal to the trials of our day. As thy day so shall thy strength be.

No. 179. To J. J. GURNEY.

1831, 3 *mo.* 15.—Whether we appear amiable or excellent in the sight of man, whose is the glory? Surely not unto us, O Lord, not unto us! weak, vile, and unworthy as we are by nature, but unto thy name be the praise, for thy mercy and thy truth's sake. Self-complacency is bad—self-righteousness is worse; for “if we wash our hands in snow-water, and make them never so clean,” my judgment, perhaps I might say my experience, tells me that it is of preventing or assisting grace, that “we are not plunged into the ditch, so that our own clothes should abhor us.” And were we perversely to continue in misusing and misapplying the Lord's gifts, there is much reason to apprehend that our fall, as that of some awful examples, might be great and deplorable.

Therefore, may a wise and gracious God honour us or not, as He sees meet, and in his own way and time—let us be careful, according to the ability afforded us, to return thanks, under every varied dispensation of his unerring wisdom! And have we, my beloved friend, ever known sweeter peace than when, in true resignation, we could adopt (and it is then only we can adopt) this memorable line,

“For all I bless Thee, most for the severe.”

This is, indeed, the solemn feast of feeling; and here is the Sabbath of the mind.

No. 180. To JOSIAH FORSTER. *

1831, 5 mo. 4.—After we parted at Leeds, I did not reach Gedney until last sixth-day evening, which we were all then favoured to do in safety. On entering my native county, for which, with all its faults, I may perhaps feel something of the predilection which I believe is common to man for his home; yet, making allowance for this, I am ready to think it does possess, in an agricultural point of view at least, some real advantages over most other counties I have seen. It probably contains a greater proportion of good land, and a much smaller one of land entirely out of cultivation; and as the result of these causes, a better condition of the labouring poor, particularly as respects their food and clothing, their comfortable cottages and gardens; nor am I inclined hastily to admit a sentiment which I know has gone abroad, of our being so much as is imagined, behind most other places in the different branches of education, religious, moral, or literary.

It is indeed true, that we have not so many public schools, either infant or adult; nor may we have an equal number of reading or scientific associations. These acknowledged advantages, the dispersed character of our agricultural population, in many parts, to a considerable extent and degree, almost necessarily precludes. But in the most remote situations with which I am acquainted, may generally be found, either in the nearest village, or it may be under the solitary roof of some aged female, the means of acquiring the common rudiments of learning, in

* Written after a visit to the meetings of Friends in Yorkshire, under appointment of the Yearly Meeting.

connexion with what seems of nearly equal importance, and which the meanest of these little seminaries are I believe, found in no very small degree to impart, habits of cleanliness, quiet, subordination, and diligence.

Nor ought we in this review entirely to overlook the great number of Dissenters, and their places for worship; especially the Methodists, that are to be found in various parts, where, fifty years ago, from seclusion and poverty, the inhabitants were very much neglected. In these sequestered spots, we may now frequently find the neat little meeting-house, with its useful auxiliary, the "Sunday" or Evening School, each contributing, though in a hidden and unobtrusive manner, to the civilization and improvement of the lower orders of the people.

As much of what I have just premised might escape the notice even of the traveller, who should visit only a few of our principal towns, in search of information on the question of intellectual improvement, I am the more inclined to say a little to thee, on the subject; not merely as an apology for a district which I think has been somewhat under-rated, but also because I know thee to be interested in these matters. Wilt thou allow me one word more? Our peasants, both parents and children, will I believe be found to give to a stranger as civil an answer, and in as intelligible language, as he will meet with elsewhere: and if in this I do not miscalculate, I must think it a criterion of some weight.

To turn now from the progress of mental to that of the material soil, I find, that, in some places, such as what was formerly denominated Lincoln heath; and the Weald or Wolds, the improvement is very great. Within the memory of man, these portions of our county presented a

wild and bleak appearance, being principally open and occupied as rabbit-warrens ; whereas, they are now almost entirely well inclosed, producing good crops of corn, turnips, and seeds, or artificial grasses. This applies to the higher lands, whilst in the lower division of Holland, in which is to be found dear Gedney, the rich appearance of our best old pastures in this fine spring, long accustomed as I have been to see them, almost surprises me. When these are contrasted, not only with the moors, but with a great proportion of inclosed and cultivated land in Yorkshire, I am not at much loss to account for the extreme difficulty, which many occupiers of poor soil at high rents find, in obtaining a bare subsistence, or that they feel themselves driven by a strong necessity from their country. I should like to walk with thee over some of our best grazing land, a small proportion of the whole, which is just now in its brightest appearance ; the grass is so thick, so small in its blade, so verdant in its colour, so short and so soft to the foot, that altogether it might almost require a poet fully to describe it. However, in my sober language, it happens to be beauty which I have eyes to see ; and viewing it as I do, I am reconciled to my lowly allotment, although I am aware that wit has at one time called it a “land of frogs ;” and at another “the paradise of graziers and gosherds.”

And thus, my friend, we are almost brought to the conclusion, that it does not much signify where a man's home is, if he is but contented ; and whilst we allow the mountaineer to be delighted with the hill that lifts him to the storm, we may by the same rule suffer the inhabitants of a lower region to rejoice in the plain that feeds, and to commend the bog that bears him.

I had almost determined to make P. and his sister, my representatives to the Yearly Meeting ; but on trying it, it did not seem quite satisfactory. I must therefore, though I am altogether unworthy of appearing in such a cause, prepare to meet it. May I, and may all who engage in it, be preserved, as on the right hand, and on the left !

No. 181. To J. J. GURNEY.

1831, 7 mo. 15.—Thy truly welcome letter found me somewhat, as thou seemest to have anticipated, if not overspread by the horror of great darkness, which is said to have fallen upon the father of the faithful, yet covered by a cloud so dense and obscure, as to be almost impervious to my spiritual vision. So that whilst the outward creation of which I am an admirer was smiling around me, birds singing, flowers blooming, sheep and oxen enlivening, by their various motions, the pastures on which they quietly grazed, every animated being cheerful, and inanimate ones gay ; yet, alas, for poor man ! the fallen lord of all this loveliness, it remains for him occasionally and deservedly to prove his exile, even from these splendid ruins of Paradise ; it is for him to know, as I cannot doubt, but thou, my beloved friend, as well as myself hast often experienced—

“ How ill the scenes that offer rest,
And heart that cannot rest, agree.”

Since writing this sentence, I opened upon a hymn which proved as I have often experienced, how interesting it is to find our thoughts and troubles expressed by a congenial

mind, though this may deprive us of all claim to originality,

“How tedious and tasteless the hours,

When Jesus no longer I see!

Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flowers,

Have lost all their sweetness for me.”

Thus circumstanced or nearly thus, it is no wonder that I was cheered by thy letter. *We*, I trust, are no strangers to the evil of our own hearts: the condition of our religious society, and of practical religion generally, is confessedly low; whilst the state of the multitude, under every name and in every country, appears to be truly affecting. And are not these legitimate causes for sorrow, yea for mourning? so deep, that it is a great favour to be enabled either by immediate or instrumental means, to keep our heads above water; but how opportunely do we often find these helps are vouchsafed to us, in that mercy which does not suffer us to be tried beyond that we are able to bear, but with the temptation provides a way to escape, as saith the apostle, that ye may be able to bear it.

16th.—There is one thing which occasioned me some exercise in London, and has attended me since I came home,—a jealousy or fear, lest amid the shakings to which thou hast alluded, and which do indeed threaten to disturb everything that can be shaken,—I have been, and am anxious, lest at such a time any of my dear kindred of friends should be moved from the one only true foundation, the Rock of Ages, Jesus Christ the righteous, and Him crucified. O that none of us may be either driven or allured from the foot of his cross!

To prevent in times like the present this greatest of all calamities happening to us, must, I apprehend, require on

our part close watchfulness unto prayer ; as it is quite to be believed that our unwearied spiritual adversary will not omit so favourable an opportunity for practising upon us ; it may be, both as a lion, a serpent, an angel of light, a reformer, or a philosopher ? We shall have need therefore of a wisdom superior to his, or to our own, to discover him under any of his transformations, and of a power above all the power of the enemy, even the whole armour of light to resist him when discovered.

It is, I think, one of the weaknesses of human nature ; and one I also believe of which our enemy often seeks to avail himself, when we are honestly endeavouring to avoid one extreme to hurry us into another, overstepping truth and rectitude, which will be generally found to lie between them. Thus, in departing from what now appears to be the striking singularity of a costume, which two centuries ago I suppose had nothing uncommon about it ; but which, by the youth of our Society of latter time, seems to have been considered as a cross unnecessarily severe, or somewhat like a yoke too grievous to be borne ; whilst I admit that mere form may be overrated, and can of itself avail us little, I do believe that the true Christian will always be distinguished by his moderation, his humility, and even his singularity. If, in this evil day, we sustain the character described in the first verse of the Psalms, we shall find it as true an axiom that, to be right we must often be singular ; so that, in relaxing, as we appear in some instances to be doing, from what perhaps may be considered the rigours of our ancient practice, I do very earnestly desire we may stop at the right point, at that common, and if we may so say, that simple simplicity in dress, language, and furniture, which may be read

and understood of all men, in all times ; preserving those who through faith and obedience are concerned to walk therein, out of the fearful, costly, and troublesome whirlpool of fashion, the vain customs, maxims, and sinful delight of a fallen and degenerate world, lying in wickedness.

Thou wilt perhaps think I am expressing myself rather earnestly ; but it is indeed my conviction, that, from despising the day of small things, many have fallen by little and little ; and that, if these ever rise again to usefulness in our Society, it must be by a close attention to what they are too apt to consider minor particulars, which in my view of them are only portions of a chain, from which, whether we apply the figure to a law of nature or of grace, whatever link we strike, disorganizes the whole.

For similar reasons, I have desired that in this critical, not to say captious age, we may not suffer ourselves to be inadvertently led into vain disputation on points that have been long and well settled ; for though it is undoubtedly right to give a reason to those who rightly inquire of the hope that is in us, yet, where questions are put in mere curiosity, or, which is worse, in a cavilling spirit, I believe silence would generally be best for all parties. For this I think we have the highest example and authority. If wise men knew by what sort of characters and from what sort of motives they are sometimes interrogated, they would think their time and talents sadly wasted by feeding a disposition, which in my opinion wants starving, if it were possible, even to death. I think thou wilt understand what sort of querists, scarcely deserving the name of disputants, I mean ; the very last I am sure thou wouldst wish to encourage : and I have some reason for

the sentiments I have just expressed, however uncharitable they may at first sight appear.

In making a few general remarks on the writings of our early predecessors, I would that we always approached them with caution and tenderness, treading lightly on the ashes or remains of the honourable dead. With the controversies of these ancient worthies, or their manner of conducting them according to the spirit of their age, we have now, I apprehend, little or nothing to do. Neither are we called upon to imitate or defend the sometimes obscure and mysterious, or, compared with that of the present day, almost absolute tautology of their style. One thing it may be well for us to remember, that, from these voluminous works, abounding as they confessedly do with great redundancy of expression, may be extracted an essence of as pure and sublime truth—if we except the Holy Scriptures, and their authors,—as perhaps ever fell from the lips or flowed from the pen of man; so that on the whole I am inclined to believe the best apology for the writings in question, if indeed they need one, would be an attentive and unprejudiced perusal of them, when they would perhaps be found to be their best, and perhaps altogether sufficient expositors.

As to my health I believe it to be pretty good, though I often seem to myself very languid, and as one declining; yet not so as to prevent my enjoying the deep retirement of my outward habitation, even whilst viewing it as a prelude to still deeper shades. Desire for me, my dear friend, when thou canst, that, whenever summoned to the dark passage of the grave, it may only prove to me, through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, a dim portal to eternal glory.

No. 182. TO CAROLINA HARRIS.

1831, 7 mo. 27.—In addressing an “elect lady,” I think the beloved disciple tells her, that he rejoiced greatly because he found of her children walking in the truth; an experience that I apprehend may have been realized by many a parent and elder since his day, both on account of their own, and the offspring of their dear friends. Would that none of them had proved the reverse of this experience to be equally true, namely, that, in the course of their pilgrimage they had found no greater sorrow, than in beholding so many who were endeared to them by the tender ties of nature and of friendship, walking not in, but out of this most excellent rule of faith and life,—the truth as it is in Jesus.

Could young persons be made fully sensible how much it is in their power to increase or diminish the happiness of age, that it is for them either to strew its pillow with roses or to plant it with thorns; did they believe this, I think some of them would pause before deciding on the course they take; and though it might be at considerable sacrifice of inclination to duty, pursue a very different one. For that the grey hairs of many a parent and parental friend, have, since the times of the Patriarch who anticipated such a close of his life, been accelerated by sorrow to the grave, is, I fear, a fact too evident to be doubted. Yet even here we can scarcely forbear exclaiming, O the excellence, the paramount superiority of the Christian religion, above every system or scheme devised by the wisdom or the strength of man. In the most extreme cases, Christianity offers a relief and a remedy to its afflic-

ted votaries of every character and under every circumstance. They find present relief in resignation and hope, and ultimately a full recompense for all their sufferings in the ineffable felicity, and the crown immortal, which await the successful issue of their warfare.

So that whether the believer's sorrows be of a domestic nature, which I think are the bitterest, or proceed from a more extraneous source; whether he languish under the severity of parents, the unkindness of a companion, the undutifulness of children, or the unfaithfulness of a friend, still, under any or every of these trials, he is not left destitute; an arm underneath supports him. If the little span of my life must be spent in grief, and my years in sighing; if indeed I must die a lingering death upon the painful cross of sorrow, yet enable me I beseech Thee, O Lord, as with my latest breath to whisper, Thy will, thy holy and adorable will, and not mine, be done.

I trust I am not insensible to the solemnity of a subject into which I have been somewhat inadvertently led by a desire to point towards a mark, which, who would venture to say they have attained, yet who but would acknowledge that it deeply concerns them to press after it?

The lamentation by the prophet Isaiah, (chapter the fifty-first,)—"There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she has brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up," is descriptive of the state of Jerusalem, when she had neither sons nor daughters to care for her. I have sometimes thought this may not only be applicable to a city or a church, but even to the pious parent or guardian of disobedient and gainsaying children. But waiving this particular point, there have been times in my

experience, if I may venture to refer to it, when the three last verses of the chapter just referred to have afforded me peculiar support, as being figuratively descriptive of or comparable to the bottom of Jordan, preservation there, and bringing up a stone of memorial from thence. O that in every future swelling of this mighty stream, should such be permitted, I may submissively enter the flood; and as with my head just above water stand still the appointed time!

This language would probably appear mysterious, if not unintelligible, to many a pious Christian, who may never have been plunged into the depth to which it alludes, but mercifully conducted on his spiritual journey, by a shorter and easier course. Yet to those, and such I believe there are, who have been safely brought through these conflicting experiences; to such a reader, the being put in remembrance of what themselves have passed through, may be sweetly harmonious, as a morning or an evening song, on the banks of deliverance.

No. 183. TO JOSIAH FORSTER.

1831, 9 mo. 2.—During my attendance of our last Yearly Meeting as well as before and since, I have felt a degree of anxiety, lest, in the present times of excitement and agitation, (in which almost everything that can be shaken seems to be put in motion,) any of the members of our little Society should be drawn from the only sure foundation—Jesus Christ the righteous. There can scarcely be a doubt but that in such a season of general commotion, our grand spiritual adversary will be very active in

endeavouring to deceive the simple by his wiles, and to mislead the inexperienced by his transformations; "but we," saith the apostle, "are not ignorant of his devices." And some there are, of lower authority than Paul, who have suffered too much by them, to forget the manner in which and by whom they have been betrayed. These know that their enemy can assume all colours and all characters. In times of persecution or adversity he is a roaring lion or a ravening wolf; whilst, in the smoother season of prosperity and outward ease, he puts on the subtlety of a serpent, becomes a reformer, a philosopher, and even, when it may suit his purposes, an angel of light; thus leading from the simplicity of the truth, and from under the power of the cross of Christ; which, as they are *his* greatest bane or opponents, so I think they will be acknowledged to constitute the strength and the beauty of the Christian. So superlatively excellent are the ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit, that, although levity may sometimes affect to despise, yet the sober judgment, even of the scorner, is found by his own confession to approve them.

Entirely to change the subject, the operation of the Beer-bill, in the country at least, I consider to be so demoralizing and mischievous, that I could scarcely express my many objections to it in too strong language, and therefore conclude it safest, as a man professing moderation, to say but little. The following anecdote may afford a little illustration. A poor but simple cottager, in speaking to my daughter on the additional facilities and temptations to drunkenness which these new beer-shops afforded, remarked, that they were enough to craze poor wives and mothers. This woman, whom I know well, was, I believe,

too deeply versed in her argument to concede it to a nation; and she supported it by such a statement of facts as I think neither the collective wisdom nor the collective eloquence even of a British senate could gainsay or invalidate. Thou mayst perhaps perceive, as is indeed the case, that I am really grieved by this thing, which, though I am very little of a politician, I cannot but consider to have been a great error in legislation. Had the duty been taken off malt, the whole family of a poor man might have derived some benefit; or even if tippling in these pothouses had been prohibited, the mischief would not have been so extensive. As it is, the whole weight of the law appears to me to be on the side of vice and starvation. The men get drunk abroad, whilst the women and children pine at home.

My mind is sometimes apt to be rather low, if I dwell too long and exclusively upon human weakness in a state of probation. Lifted up and cast down—changed from vessel to vessel—alternately tossed like a ball from one extreme to another, without ability to bear any of them well:—thus exercised, is it surprising if poor nature should shrink, and, that, like the disciples at sea, we exclaim, “Lord, carest thou not that we perish?” Yet weak as we confessedly are, how have we been helped hitherto! let us not then despair, but hope to the end.

No. 184. To J. AND H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1831, 9 mo. 29.—I sincerely hope the enemy of peace, who has sown discord in some other places, may not be suffered to introduce it here. And yet I am sometimes jealous; and in these unsettled times, when everything

that can be shaken seems to be in motion, I have been of late more than ordinarily jealous, lest he who beguiled Eve by his subtlety, should by any means get an entrance among us, if not as a lion or as a bear, yet under the equally dangerous transformation of an angel of light, as a guise more adapted to our present improved state of education and intellectual refinement.

We know that learning has its appropriate temptations, and knowledge its peculiar dangers ; so that, I think, with all our acknowledged advantages, we have more need of watchfulness against being puffed up or bewildered by them, than might be the case with our rude forefathers, though, doubtless, they had their temptations and trials fitted to their state. For I quite believe that both the unlearned and the learned, the wise and the ignorant, have one common enemy and one common salvation ; and that this salvation is of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, through the blessed, eternal Spirit, to which I think the New Testament bears abundant witness. And to you, my valued friends, I can make the appeal, do we not find it true in experience ? Oh, what should we be without the appointed Saviour, in all his divine offices, and in the completeness of his character !

As to Unitarianism, I consider it in many cases to be the first step towards what thou hast justly denominated something further on the road to destruction. I have a very low opinion of that man's practical and consistent Theism who denies the divinity of Christ. For what signify sophistical distinctions, or the most sublime epithets and exalted character, as applied only to the Father, if we deny the Son, who has declared himself to be the way to Him ?

No. 185. To PETER BEDFORD.

1831, 10 *mo.* 31.—Under all the disadvantages and humiliations of our poor yet dear little Society, there is, I believe, amongst us a people, as in Israel of old, a remnant, much overlooked it may be by the world, and even despised by its Goliaths, who would not willingly bow the knee to Baal or kiss his image. May this little band increase; and few though they appear, may we, under every trial and mutation, be found enrolled among them!

Locality of outward situation and circumstance are in themselves very inferior considerations. Thus, in the shade and retirement of country life, I have often found—

How ill the scenes that offer rest,
And heart that cannot rest, agree.

Whilst, in the crowded and noisy metropolis, thou hast, I doubt not, enjoyed that quiet habitation, into which the Lord's children are at seasons permitted to enter; a rest which, as neither solitude nor silence can of themselves procure, so neither can tumult much disturb, certainly not destroy. Still, with poor Cowper, I love the country.

No. 186. To J. J. GURNEY.

1831, 11 *mo.* 4.—The near approach of joining the committee for visiting London and Middlesex Quarterly Meeting is felt by me, in some proportion, I trust, to its importance, to be indeed weighty. If I may judge

by my state of mind lately, I shall leave home in too great weakness, to adopt the language of David's faith, when he said, "Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war shall rise against me, in this will I be confident." I have been made thankful, however, in the remembrance and appropriation of a few supplicatory expressions of the prophet Jeremiah, "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for thou art my praise," (xvii. 14.)

No. 187. To SARAH SQUIRE.

1831, 11 *mo.* 23.—Although I too have known times when I should have been glad to be prepared and released; or in other words that the important and arduous work of the soul's salvation might be cut short in righteousness and mercy; yet I have found, as I doubt not but that thou hast also done, that both the time and manner for effecting this must be left in other and better hands than my own; and that I must neither with Joshua continue to lie prostrate on the ground, nor with Elijah remain hid in a cave; but rather seek for a renewal of patience and ability to know and to do the Lord's will, either in act or sufferance, adopting the apostle's language, "Seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not."

No. 188. To J. J. GURNEY.

1832, 4 *mo.* 20.—I sometimes think, (or ought I to say imagine?) that such redeemed spirits as, after traversing this

world's wilderness, and crossing the deep waters of Jordan are mercifully admitted into the heavenly Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey ; that these happy souls may there be classified either as stars according to their magnitude and glory, as vessels by their various capacities for receiving and containing the ineffable felicity of which all shall be full, or which is an idea distinct from either of these as minds possessing different temperaments, according to their affinities and attractions. In either of the two former cases I can easily believe my own situation must be a very low, yet possibly not a less thankful one than that of the rapt seraph, who with brighter effulgence, not more ardent love, adores and burns in nearer approach to the throne of God and of the Lamb : but should my last supposition, congeniality, prove to be the best, then comes the pleasing dream, that, all other destinations apart, even *we* may rejoice and sing together. Thou wilt perceive as I do, that this is all speculation,—I think there is no heresy in it, and I hope that between us it may be harmless, and having heaven for its subject, cheering ; for, however unworthy we may be, 'tis sweet to think of heaven.

. . . That we want power as well as precept, may perhaps be considered an axiom in Christian divinity. I have of late been impressed with the insufficiency of precept, however imparted, without accompanying ability to reduce it to practice, convinced as I am that not all I have heard from my fellow mortals, or read in the best of books, would enable me to support the character of a practical Christian, without something also of that substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ; which the apostle appears to consider, not only as the basis, but the essence of a faith superior to that of the

understanding, in connexion and co-operation with which, I think, we can only receive power to become the sons of God. I cannot doubt, my dear friend, but that whilst thou art diligently and earnestly engaged in unfolding the doctrines of Christianity, and illustrating the principles of our peculiar profession of it, thou often findest it necessary to recommend the attention of thy hearers and readers to the root of both, Christ within the hope of glory, without whom by his good Spirit in the heart, neither can doctrine be rightly received and understood, nor principle brought as it ought to be, into daily life and conversation.

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself” said an apostle, and this witness I think is an evidence of invisible things, something that cannot be shaken, of universal application and benefit, on which the soul may safely rest. Were it not for recurrence to, and a reliance upon this unspeakable gift, I am free to confess that there are moments in which almost everything else seems inadequate to my support—seasons wherein both the mystery of godliness and the mystery of iniquity, or in other words, the inscrutable nature of the Divine economy in the government of this lower world, with that greatest of all paradoxes, the conduct of misguided and sinful man, would greatly perplex and endanger me.

As it is, sustained, I trust, by a portion of the faith alluded to, I struggle on, resolving what is strange and embarrassing in human conduct, into the trials and temptations attendant on a fallible and corrupt yet free agent in a state of probation, believing literally and in simplicity, such portions of the sacred records as may be opened to my understanding, and receiving with humble reverence what may be secret and unrevealed in holy

writ, on the testimony and faithfulness of its divine Author, of whose existence, supremacy, and wisdom, I have been assured, not merely or principally by hearing or reading, but by the too generally despised mediums—or rather sources—feeling and experience; mediums which many even among the pious and learned, are too much afraid of accrediting, lest they should become, or be accounted, enthusiasts, fanatics &c.; though by this dereliction from that essential faith of which we have spoken, and which is too obvious in some of their writings, they appear to me to fall short of the truth, and to deprive themselves and others of much good.

21st.—I went a few weeks since to Runcton, to visit our late mutually esteemed friend A. M. G., when she was near the close of her life. How sweetly on this occasion, I remembered Addison, “See in what peace a Christian can die!” and Young,

“The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
Is privileged beyond the common walk of virtuous life,
Quite on the verge of heaven.”

I believe feelings correspondent with these animating expressions were at times very prevalent, during the rather lingering and painful illness of our worthy friend. I cannot help feeling how my valued cotemporaries, one by one, glide from my view, whilst I am at present left in the enjoyment of a degree of health and strength, which,—my age and what often passes within considered,—almost surprises me. So true it is, that body sometimes supports mind, and vice versâ: this is encouraging, when we see how *both* often languish and sink together.

No. 189. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

1832, 5 *mo.* 4.—Connected with the subject of death, I may tell thee, that one evening lately I went, as I am occasionally wont to do, to visit the little cemetery in which, for many generations, the remains of my forefathers have been laid ; where also rest those of my parents, my wife, and three of my children, and where probably, ere long, my own dust shall mingle with theirs. On returning homewards at an hour when the cottagers were in their houses, the birds and the beasts reposing, and the weather perfectly calm, I was struck by the surrounding scene, which seemed as it were to place me alone in the world. Thus circumstanced, my mind was almost unconsciously raised—for it seems as if we could not help localizing even invisible things—towards that home beyond the skies, to which from infancy to age, through all life's vicissitudes, it has been led at times to aspire, sometimes with hope, often with fear and discouragement.

Perhaps partly from temperament, partly from rural habits, and partly from age, which loves and wants quietness, or it may be, from their united influence,—but I can scarcely tell thee, how thankful I sometimes feel for the retirement of my home ; that lodge in the wilderness which thou hast seen. Here I can not only see a coach pass in the distance, without hearing the noise of its wheels, but which I value much more, here I can sigh in secret, and only emerge from my obscurity, when, as it may be well they sometimes do, circumstances draw me reluctantly out of it. And yet I hope I am neither an ascetic nor a misanthrope ; I am sure I would not affect these characters.

1832, 7 mo. 7.—Much as I find in myself to bewail, I think these solitudes may not be altogether on my own account. For my children, my friends, and the church, especially that section of it to which I am by birth and judgment attached, I feel much ; not too much, yet at times enough to make me so weary—perhaps I ought rather to say so impatient of warfare—as to produce a sigh for its close. This I know is poor and selfish, and can only find its apology in the merits and mercies of that great High Priest, who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, having been tempted as we are, but, and here lies a grand distinction, without sin.

And yet whilst the feeling of our being poor sinful creatures, as we confessedly are, gives us a more exalted view of the inherent strength, and immaculate purity of our adorable Redeemer, it should, I have thought, increase the tenderness of our sympathy, and the fervency of our prayers one for another, as partakers in the same fall, and heirs of the same salvation. Not then so much against the sinner, as sin, should our antipathies be, and our spiritual weapons be directed. Perhaps it is only in the school of deep probation, that we could sufficiently learn the lesson of being kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as we hope God for Christ's sake will forgive us.

It is indeed one of the most humiliating things imaginable, to unrol the pages of our experience, which yield little but cause for mourning, and lamentation, and woe ; yet what an interesting sense of human condition and circumstance does the perusal leave behind it, enabling us in

true self-abasement, and yet without despair, to adopt the language, "who is weak, and I am not weak?"

Thy account of dear S. G.'s visit and services amongst you was very acceptable intelligence to me; his ministry, conversation, and example having, I think, each of the times of his being in England, been blessed to me. When he was at Gedney last autumn he dwelt at considerable length, in our little meeting, on the Apostle Paul's comfort in trouble, as set forth in 2 Cor. 1; in which the Almighty is described, as the past, present, and future helper of his children and servants,—as He (said S. G., with much emphasis) who hath delivered and who we trust will yet deliver us. I was comforted and strengthened by the manner in which he was enabled to treat a subject, which I believe at the time was very interesting to us both.

Cannot you peep at us by the way towards Lancashire? Gedney, like other grazing districts, often appears rather dreary to strangers in winter, but is now about in its prime. A scene thou knowest may be lovely though the heart of him that views it be faint; still the note of the blackbird, and the fragrance of the woodbine may help to keep him from fainting. In the two latter charms of nature, I think we just now excel.

No. 191. To SAMUEL ROUTH.

1832, 5 mo. 7.—I should be sorry to administer an undue degree of discouragement. Although oftentimes perplexed, I am not in despair; and yet, if I am not greatly mistaken, we as a Society do much want arousing from our earthly slumbers to a deeper and more practical sense of the importance of religion; and in the nervous language

of Young, to be taught more earnestly "to weigh the moment of eternal things." I am not without some hope that, not only passing events but future prospects may powerfully tend to produce this effect in many minds. Few things appear more calculated to do this, than the pestilence which walketh in darkness, or the destruction that wasteth at noon-day, in connexion with the dark and gloomy aspect of our political horizon.

It was affecting to me to observe by thy lines, that, in addition to the recent removal of thy valuable aunt Susannah Clark, several others of your elderly women, friends whom I have long known and greatly esteemed, seem to be fast declining. Still let us remember according to the expressions of a sweet hymn, that, though a Paul has run his race, or an Apollos dies, Israel is not left without resource &c. On one occasion, I remember, when casting a mournful look over a meeting, which, having been stripped of its leading members, seemed to be left almost desolate, I was suddenly checked, almost reproved, for my despondency by the consideration, that, although other heads were removed, the Everlasting Head of the church remaineth, and that in Him is all-sufficiency.

As a judge of rural affairs and an admirer of the outward creation, thou canst scarcely fail to observe with sensations of gratitude, the bounty of a gracious Providence, in sending the present genial weather, and with it the prospect of food and gladness, to dependent and unworthy man, as well as to the inferior and unconscious tribes of animal existence, clothing also the vegetable kingdom in its new and annual robes of beauty.

How numerous and diversified are the reproduced adornments of spring, where sin or sorrow, or the lust of wealth

does not cause them to be passed unheeded ! Perhaps few enjoy them with a more lively and innocent delight than children : this is strikingly the case with my son John's little ones, five in number, from about two to eight years old. Being at present favoured with health, they seem quite enraptured by the sights and sounds, which on every hand surround them, and their grandsire is pleased to see them so happy. Next to the praises of the "Great First Cause," perhaps there is no subject to which verse is more adapted, or on which it is better employed, than in unfolding the charms and the splendours of his magnificent works, as these lie scattered everywhere both in earth, in air, and sea, minute and beautiful, or rude and grand. Accordingly some of our best poets with several others, have contributed their mites in humbler strains to that general harmony which seems to bid creation, through all its realms, rejoice in the goodness, the greatness, the wisdom, and the majesty of its Author.

No. 192. TO JOSIAH FORSTER.

1832, 6 mo. 28.—Were it not for a little of the Christian's faith and hope, what should I,—what should any of us sometimes do ? As it is, though most unworthy, I sometimes endeavour to cling to these ; commiserating, to a degree which I cannot fully express, those who unhappily want, because they seek not, or reject this support. Whither, ah ! whither shall the confirmed unbeliever fly in the day when he is called to an account ? This is a query that frequently and deeply affects me in contemplating the refined infidelity, the false, the bewildering philosophy of the present day, which so far as I can understand it,

denies Christ in the most essential and important part of his character, even his divinity. Inseparable from such a denial as this, is there not reason to fear, may be the awful and positive declaration of the Saviour himself? "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father, which is in heaven."

29th.—I am fond of children, and sometimes meet with a return. Whilst I was writing last evening, my little grand-daughters, (of which I have two,) brought one a rose and the other a fine strawberry, and placed them on either side me. How sweet I felt was this unbought and unsolicited love of infant innocence! Surely, I have thought if there yet remains a trace of Paradise in human nature, or in this lower world, it is to be found here!

No. 193. TO JONATHAN BACKHOUSE.

1832, 7 mo. 17.—I hope that thou wilt not be greatly discouraged by the low views I am sometimes led to take of my own state. Such has been my experience, and such the texture of my mind, that I apprehend these views may be safest for me. And I am the more induced to think so, because I am seldom if ever more peaceful, than when with simplicity, not apathy and poverty, yet above despair, I can approach the footstool of all that is wise, powerful, and good; a situation perhaps, somewhat comparable to Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus. Whenever I can attain this state of mind, I rejoice, though it may be with trembling; for, though the world, even the religious world, does not seem in general to comprehend it, I have long and decidedly been of the sentiment, that there is a

silence which is not the silence of death ; and a stillness that is not the stillness of the grave ; yet do not mistake me, I am no enemy to words fitly spoken, either in conversation or otherwise.

No. 194. To JOSEPH FOSTER.

1832, 7 *mo.* 31.—Here I would pause to observe, how entirely at this eleventh hour of my life, I feel dependent upon the atoning sacrifice of a Redeemer, or in other words, upon the mercy of God in and through Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of all my sins, both of omission and commission. For after all we have done, or can do, in the way of our duty, we are still but unprofitable servants ; and shall at last have need of the intercession of that Great High Priest, who, touched with a feeling of our infirmities can availingly plead for us—to Him then let us flee ;—to Him let us cleave.

Thou wilt, I think, be ready to conclude with me that the present are very eventful and unsettled times, not only in the political, but in what is called the religious world ; to say nothing of the awful pestilence, [cholera] which seems to be entirely providential. In such a season of complicated trials, may we, my dear friend, be preserved in tranquillity and patience, free from the spirit of contention and commotion, and, as much as in us lies, at peace with all men. I seldom am more comfortable than when I feel the greatest charity for others, and the least indulgence for myself ; desiring that whatever I may be denominated on earth, I may at last be numbered with the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written

in heaven. And this church, I rejoice in being able with increasing faith and hope to believe, is composed of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people :—yea, of every individual, who feareth God and worketh righteousness.

Not that I would be understood as thinking that even the outward religious profession any of us may make is a matter of indifference. On this important subject, let every one seriously consider, and be fully persuaded in his own mind. There are also degrees in all things ; so it may be, even as to some of the external circumstances of religion, in reference to which, my own experience (if I may be allowed to mention it) has been this,—that after trying in my earlier days to find an easier way than that in which I had been educated, enduring much disappointment and sorrow in not succeeding ; and some proof since, as I trust I may truly say, of its safety and excellence when submitted to ; I am at length brought to the unavoidable conclusion, that, where the principles of our society are acted upon, and lived up to, they will invariably produce a character the nearest in its approach to the precepts and the example of the divine Author of the Christian religion.

At our age, for I also am growing old, it is a very great privilege to have the use of our limbs, so as to be able to do common things for ourselves ; and it is perhaps a still higher privilege to retain the power of exercising our intellectual faculties, whereby we discern good from evil, and are conscious not only of our own joys and griefs, but alive also to those of others, so that we can on suitable occasions rejoice with those who do rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

No. 195. To J. J. AND M. GURNEY.

1832, 10 *mo.* 1.—In a mental visit to you this morning, I have, though very unworthy, been permitted a little to emerge from the low estate wherein it is my frequent lot to dwell, into a sweet feeling of sympathy and affection towards you. This feeling I cannot better describe than by expressions, which — in a letter to me, applied to the spiritual relation, that, previously to his death, had subsisted between herself and her late beloved and honoured father, and which she very appropriately denominated, “a unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, that no language can fully set forth.” And yet, my dear friends, I have had renewedly to believe this morning, in connexion with my remembrance of you, that, though words may not clearly define it, the thing itself is a substantial reality, and under such a persuasion, I can humbly, (I hope,) rejoice and invite you, if you are able, to rejoice with me. How precious is the love over which time and absence have no power; and which even the intervention of oceans and continents cannot sever. Allowable pleasure is not so frequent a visiter to my poor heart, as to be too hastily dismissed when she does really deign me a call. And though I say this cheerfully, I do not say it lightly; but I trust in a degree of reverent thankfulness to the Author of all our mercies, who, in the midst of this tumultuous and troubled scene, grants even to the lowest of his children and family their seasons of rejoicing. “In the world,” said our adorable Redeemer, “ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

No. 196. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

1832, 10 *mo.* 13.—As to the motions of my mind, though these may not be very few, nor some of them in my own apprehension of the smoothest description, yet they are for the most part of too personal a kind to incline me to trouble thee with their detail. Rather, as more befitting myself and more cheering to thee, let me with gratitude to the Author of all our mercies, however derived, a truth of which I hope in the midst of all my infirmities, I become increasingly sensible; let me devoutly return thanks to my heavenly Father for the continuance of his long-suffering mercy, and for the glimpse of hope sometimes vouchsafed, that, through the mediation and intercession of his beloved Son, my sins may ultimately be forgiven me, and I may find rest to my very unworthy soul.

No. 197. To SARAH SQUIRE.

1832, 10 *mo.* 25.—As it has for a considerable time past been a season of peculiar trial to me, and not liking to write to thee complainingly, I have not written at all. This I assure thee has neither been owing to forgetfulness, nor the decline of an interest in thy welfare, or that of thy family. But there are, as I believe, my dear friend, thou very well knowest, times and circumstances, which make us as it were dumb with silence; and wherein we are willing even to put our mouths in the dust, if so be there may be hope. With humiliation and thankfulness, I may to thee acknowledge that hope has not forsaken me. No,

after having passed through much vicissitude, and many tribulations, a hope in the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, is the anchor and stay of my soul ; and, I cannot doubt, of thine also.

No. 198. To JONATHAN BACKHOUSE.

1832, 10 mo. 26.—It would be difficult for me to express how much I feel interested in thy and thy wife's welfare ; not so much for the health and safety of your persons, though this is important, as that you may be preserved from every kind of spiritual harm : the times on both sides the water seem to me unsettled ; and we have an unwearied adversary ready to turn every variety of circumstance to our disadvantage. In heights, he would exalt us above measure ; in depths, depress us below hope, and in difficulties, so obscure and bewilder our minds, as to involve us in inextricable labyrinths. But thanks be to God, he is not invincible. By watchfulness and prayer he may be overcome ; and though I thus write, I have a strong consolatory hope, that, over all your conflicts and trials, you will ultimately obtain the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Perhaps there are few lessons in the Christian school, that we are more unwilling, and therefore longer in practically learning, than this, that “to the Lord our God, belong mercies and forgiveness, but to us shame and confusion of face.” Indeed, no testimony,—*nothing* short of experience, could make us believe the full extent of this truth, which is so humiliating, that we are ready even to distrust the evidence of our own slowly and dearly purchased knowledge. It seems to be the last stronghold

which pride, spiritual pride, especially from necessity not choice, is compelled to resign. But when once fully resigned, and the surrender duly ratified by a meek and lowly walk before the Lord, oh then, what joy and peace in believing ! then we find no difficulty in humbling ourselves on every occasion that calls for the "exercise of humility." We can now pathetically, and in sympathy exclaim, in the language of poor Job : "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear ; but now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." We sensibly feel that it is through the Lord's tender mercies, we have not long ago been consumed ; yet great and manifold as may have been our transgressions, we can even glory in our infirmities, and rejoice in a reconciled Father, receiving as our just portion the profoundly abasing language of Ezekiel, " And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord : that thou mayst remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." (xvi. 62, 63.)

Thus, my dear friends, I exhibit to you a leaf out of the book of experience ; yet appalling as the picture may seem, I am not dismayed at it, but rather encouraged by finding that the frequent contemplation of it disposes me to love the Lord more, and myself less, than perhaps any other object or subject were capable of effecting.

No. 199. To J. J. GURNEY.

1832, 11 mo. 14.—Attached as I think I sincerely am to the principles of our religious Society, as those of pure

and unsophisticated Christianity, (believing as I do that in every Christian denomination there are many estimable characters, and I rejoice when I can discover them;) I am grieved whenever, and in whatever instance, I behold an appearance of dereliction from them; so that on taking a retrospect of the declension, or shall I say desolation,—that living long has given me the sad opportunity of witnessing in individual character, in families, and in meetings,—I cannot always refrain from mourning.

In these mental reviews most commonly taken in hours, which, though set apart for repose are sleepless, I am sometimes reminded, (perhaps in a degree of sympathy,) of a good man of old who perambulated Jerusalem by night;—not forgetting that there is a striking difference between Nehemiah and myself, whilst he had power to rebuild, repair &c. I can only suffer and sigh, beseeching the Most High, who was his and ancient Israel's helper, that He would be pleased to raise up and qualify amongst us, those who might repair our breaches, not so much in the walls of our discipline or morality; as either by the immediate and powerful visitations of his own Holy Spirit, or by a peculiar blessing on the labours of his servants, to rebuild that spiritual house, which many of our forefathers inhabited with delight, and wherein we profess to dwell. For it seems to me to be almost beyond a probability, that, unless the Lord arise for our help, and unless greater obedience is yielded to his requirements, we shall still further decline; so true is the two-fold position, that, as on one hand unless the Lord build the city, they labour in vain that build it, so on the other, without faith and its corresponding fruits it is impossible to please God. It is a relief to me to have discovered a friend to whom, for the

first, and perhaps the last time in my life, I can open my mind so fully on this delicate yet weighty subject :—hoping that, grave as it is, it need not greatly discourage *us* from pursuing each, according to his gift and measure, the path of duty respectively assigned us,—an obligation that would remain precisely the same, had we no other companions ; and this obligation may be described in few words,—the simple endeavour to know the will of God, and do it ; for exactly thus runs the tenor of my commission, and I cannot doubt but thine also. Let us then desire above all things first a knowledge of the Divine will, and next an ability to perform it ; thus shall we become the obedient, and finally the happy children of the Lord !

I was quite obliged by thy *penny* enclosure.* There is one section of it, which, though it may please a Manchester weaver, I am not, with the rural habits and notions of a Gedney farmer, quite prepared to go the full length of, I mean in the commendation of machinery, which, to the extent and in the way in which I suppose it is principally employed, must I think, in a majority of cases, be liable to strong objection. A factory life, for instance, appears to me to be a very unnatural and unhealthy one, and without the strict religious oversight of the principal and subordinate managers, is almost sure to become debased and immoral. But is such a case, as I have supposed, to be found, or even to be expected, in the generality of cases ? I fear not, especially where the wealth of an individual, or the aggrandizement of a family, forms the main spring and leading feature of the whole concern ; and where muscles,

* Address to the Mechanics of Manchester, by J. J. Gurney. Price 1*d.*

sinews, and nerves, from those of the master to his lowest dependant—where the wood, stone, brass, and iron of the building and its furniture, (nor must we omit the lead, whether animal or metallic,) where each of these articles makes but part and parcel, and all of them combined, form one mighty apparatus for getting money. Such an engine, however splendid or powerful, I neither admire nor approve.

Amidst the much that pleases me in this address, there is one sentiment which I can most fully and cordially receive; it is that which supposes our humility to bear a considerable proportion to, if not to be dependent on, the *depth* of our knowledge, whether this knowledge be derived from self-examination, philosophical research, religious inquiry, or their united influence: these may not be thy exact words, but I think they embrace thy opinion, in support of which thou hast very appropriately introduced the name of one, who, on account of his eminence both in science and lowliness of mind, has been justly and honourably denominated the child-like sage. As the true Christian would not desire a higher title, so perhaps he can scarcely propose to himself a brighter example, than that of the individual in question,—the pious philosopher, Isaac Newton.

No. 200. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

1832, 12 *mo.* 28.—Having alluded rather indirectly to the world and its movements, I would tell thee what a privilege I have found it, to be sheltered at Gedney, during the electioneering tumults that have lately so much agitated many cities and towns. Here, though under thatch,

I have slept securely, and when I awoke, instead of human riot, and a mob assailing my dwelling, I have beheld brute innocence, gentle sheep, and lively yet harmless birds, passing in quiet review before me ; whilst the greenness of the grass, ivy, and other perennials, which are rather plentiful here, are more refreshing to my sight, and more congenial to the general tone of my mind, than the fervid heat and all the glowing beauty of departed summer. But this thou wilt recollect is the voice of age ; such also may seem the further observation, that the animals to which I have alluded appear to me, when at rest and happy, to be emblematic of the *peace*, and the evergreens of the *perpetuity* of that state into which through the mediatorial plan of a gracious Creator, and the merits of an appointed Saviour, I sometimes faintly hope, ere very long to enter ; I say faintly, because humility becomes us ; and because however much any of us may be favoured with outward comforts and friendships, we shall whilst passing through this state of probation all have our changes, and amongst them our low seasons. Indeed, it must be so, if the saying be true, “ He has no hope who never had a fear ;” or if we attend to the solemn injunction of the apostle, “ To work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.”

No. 201. To J. J. GURNEY.

1833, 1 mo. 24.—Our philosophical lecturer, whilst dealing with second causes, not unfrequently in a familiar and agreeable way turns the attention of his audience to “ the great First Cause least understood ;” thus making science the handmaid of religion. This appears to me as it should be, because at one stroke it exalts the Creator and humbles the

creature, producing such feelings and sentiments as these, Lord what is man! How wonderful are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all! How is it that amidst so many powerful agencies in constant operation, both within us and around us, we exist in a state of life, health, and comfort! Only by thy nice adjustment and adaptation, as to a particle or an hair's breadth, of all these astonishing phenomena. Seen as we now behold it, through a glass darkly, here seems to be an exhaustless theme of adoration and praise: how much more when in the regions of light and of glory, the veil shall be taken away!

No. 202. To J. J. GURNEY.

1833, 2 mo. 20.—My general health for a man of seventy-three, I suppose I ought to consider quite at an average, and so far as I know, to use a law phrase, I am of "sound disposing mind and memory." What then is the matter? thou mayst be ready to ask. Indeed it is a question I have put closely to myself, and one part of the answer seems to be, that a time has arrived in which the grasshopper is become a burthen, things which at an earlier day would have seemed comparatively light, now press more heavily; and the mighty movements of the world's great Babel, or in plainer language, the divided conflict between good and evil, that so strongly marks the era in which we live, prevailing everywhere and pervading almost everything, is too much for my declining powers, and inclines, nearly compels me, to seek in silence and retirement, at least a temporary repose. Still I endeavour to keep my eyes and ears open to any intimation of duty, should such be vouchsafed me; being, I hope, sin-

cerely desirous of realizing a state spoken of in Scripture, "I sleep, but my heart waketh."

I sometimes think these stirring signs of the times may somewhat resemble a troubled ocean "rocking itself to rest," that they may prove like the harbingers of that brighter day, in which, without the notion of a Millennium, many hitherto unfulfilled prophecies shall receive a more full completion, and amongst them one which I think neither the least beautiful nor glorious. (see Isaiah xi. 6—9.) The meridian of such a day I cannot expect to see; but it is something to behold its dawn, though it be but as the first faint streak of morning light in the eastern horizon.

By a letter from a friend in the north, I have lately received very satisfactory information of J. and H. B. and of J. B. and his companion, also of D. W. and of the objects of his concern, and from another quarter of S. G. and W. A. In the proceedings of these missionaries, whom we may perhaps with some propriety call our own, I feel deeply interested: at the same time wishing well to all of every religious name, who, from proper motives and qualifications shall engage in services so arduous and important; yet I believe it is better for us as a Society to be cautious of much mixing on this weighty subject.

No. 203. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

1833, 5 mo. 23.—Although I have thought myself rather too weakly to accompany my children to the Yearly Meeting, yet I do not forget my dear friends who are now assembled from distant parts, and I hope in considerable numbers for its attendance. The contrast of numbers, and coincidence in time, between the men's and

women's first sittings yesterday at Devonshire House and the little week-day meeting which about the same hour I attended at Gedney, sensibly impressed without greatly discouraging me ; and whilst I hope I desired, however feebly, my own preservation, I was not unconcerned for such of my absent brethren and sisters, on whom the weighty business of our annual solemnity must fall.

Being permitted to enjoy a degree of quietness in staying at home, which I hope is not the apathy of a false rest, I would not admit gloomy forebodings as to the Yearly Meeting ; yet without either officiousness or an over solicitude, I may perhaps express to thee a desire that attends me, that concerned Friends may watch with jealous care two great turning points, or leading principles of our Society, if not of Christianity itself ; namely, the universality of Divine grace, and as I think was properly designated in a general epistle a few years since, though it gave offence to some, the perceptible influence of this grace upon the mind of man. Were I to give up either of these points, I should resemble a vessel at sea without sail or rudder, the sport of winds and waves, and be consequently in great danger of making shipwreck of faith.

There is also another point on which the watchmen and and watchwomen on our walls may do well, both in meetings and out of them, to keep a quiet and steady eye. I mean the character of our adorable Redeemer in all his offices and attributes. Respecting which, if I may be allowed again to introduce myself, it will be to make the full and free acknowledgment, that, were it not for an assurance of the sufficiency of his atonement for sins past ; of his mediation and advocacy for my every day faults, and finally of his love and mercy as a compassionate

High Priest, touched with a feeling of my infirmities ; and in this capacity at the great day of account, introducing my disembodied soul into the presence of that awful Majesty and ineffable Glory which otherwise I dare not approach, and could not behold : I say—were it not for hopes and expectations like these, I should not only be of all men, but of all animal existences, the most miserable. I might then envy the passing brute, and like one we read of, when congratulated on his worldly felicity, my heart would respond by a groan unutterable to his agonizing thought, “O that I were that dog !”

Well, here I stand, sometimes trembling stand, as on the brink of eternity ; and whatever worldly wisdom might think of it, this is the result of my experience. O that it may never cost another what through unbelief and disobedience it has cost me to attain it ! But I believe it is now as it was formerly declared to be, because of unbelief that we do not *sooner*—and if unbelief is persisted in—*ever* enter into rest.

If we did but leave our times on all subjects more quietly than we sometimes do in the Lord's hand, we should feel the better for it ourselves, and probably be less displeasing to Him. I am fully convinced of this, but often find myself failing in practice. A day however is approaching wherein this and all my other infirmities shall, I reverently hope, be covered with a mantle, purchased for me by the precious blood of the immaculate Lamb.

No 204. To J. J. GURNEY.

1833, 9 mo. 25.—How full of valuable interest did the account of thy dear mother R. F.'s illness, death,

and burial, and those of thy interviews with George Withy and William Wilberforce, make thy last communication !

There seems to have been a striking coincidence in the minds of these pious individuals, on a very important part of Christian experience ; that they themselves were nothing, but that Christ was everything, their stay, their staff, and their only hope of salvation. I believe it not unfrequently happens that the most favoured religious characters previous to their putting off mortality, are thus unrobed of all that formerly distinguished them from their brethren ; and with no other covering, than the simple vest of humility, which may long have been as sackcloth underneath, wait the coming of the Lord to clothe them with the wedding garment, and thus render them admissible into his marriage-chamber. From this blessed and happy mansion that thy poor friend may not be finally excluded, has both in sickness and in health, in his best and in his worst days, for many and many a year, been one of his most fervent, though most secret prayers, scarcely known indeed but to Him who can read the heart.

My late dear friend Rachel Fowler's present of the memoir of her precious companion was duly received, and having been read both privately and to our little circle, is much valued both for the sake of the giver and the gift. Without going further into particulars, it may afford some notion of my own impressions, to say that I do not recollect reading a piece of biography that seemed a more exact counterpart of its original ; and of this original I never knew a man who appeared to me to sustain the character of a Christian with greater propriety and effect. As a light in the world, his "rays diffusive," I must

assuredly believe, tended to cheer, encourage, and direct many of his fellow-pilgrims in their journey through the obscure and difficult paths of this checkered, bewildering, and probationary scene. I cannot doubt but that he is now receiving the end of his faith, as a star in its appointed place, in the everlasting kingdom of his God and Saviour.

[Alluding to some peculiar trials, at the close of his letter our beloved friend says,] "I am endeavouring to seek refuge, where in former troubles I have sometimes found it, by an acquiescence in the permitted, no less than in the commanded, appointments of an overruling Providence, who I believe can, if He please, remove me from trouble, or trouble from me, without a miracle; and if it should be consistent with his inscrutable wisdom, that I should die upon this cross, O, may He enable me to say, "Thy will be done!"

No. 205. To J. J. GURNEY.

1833, 9 mo. 28.—I would just add, that thine and dear M.'s late visit here was not merely pleasant to us, but to me it has left solid satisfaction in its frequent retrospect, like one of those circumstances wherewith, under the denomination of "helps," a gracious Providence from time to time, and as He sees our need of them, relieves our wilderness journey. These helps are various, both in kind and degree; for our great Alchymist can transmute even the least occurrence into gold or a jewel. Thus, since you left us, I have received another of these favours, by an interesting communication from our mutually beloved J. and H.; and again I have derived much comfort from the

remembrance of this verse in Proverbs, "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children shall have a place of refuge."

When we are fording the current of adversity, which, in its windings, often intersects our path, even such little incidents as these sometimes prove like stepping-stones, on which we can place our feet awhile, and, if not without fear, at least without dismay, calmly survey the surrounding waters. But, alas! such is the temperament, such the unworthiness, and such are the weights we have to carry, that it is difficult for some of us, as I believe thou wast to thy cost made sensible of in our little meeting, to keep our heads above water. May it please Him who prayed that Peter's faith might not fail, to intercede for us! Here is my sheet-anchor.

No. 206. To J. J. GURNEY.

1833, 10 mo. 8.—Thy account of your late Quarterly Meeting, as well as thy information respecting divers absent friends, who are mutually dear to us, were, so far as I am capable of receiving them, matters of comfort and encouragement to me. For though it is true that my present state of mind is deservedly a low one, and the elements seem in commotion around me, yet I still am permitted to hope that my feet are established upon that rock, from which they shall never be entirely removed; and a single ray of this hope, to those who have known despair, is an unspeakable mercy. I was glad of thy reference to dear Priscilla's hymns. This little volume has long been a treasure to me, almost next to the Bible. I can hardly tell

which it suits best, my spiritual state or my failing memory. The one thou pointedst out is indeed both beautiful and excellent; and under another class, headed *Conflict*, what depths of mysterious experience are developed. The first time I remember to have read *Prayer answered by Crosses*, I was astonished at its unfoldings. How many times I have read it since, both in the lines of the book and in those of experience, I cannot tell; but I find them to agree so fully, that my surprise now is, that it should be possible for such a description to be so realized.

As I intend no complaint by the last remark, so I hope it will administer no discouragement. I believe that, with myself, thou art reconciled to the doctrine of Christ crucified; and that, if we would be his followers, we must expect to suffer a variety of afflictions, both from within and from without. I have sometimes thought when under trial, and found the thought a strengthening one, that if, according to the prophet, He, our adorable Redeemer, did no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth, yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and put Him to grief, with many other expressions in the same chapter of the like import; should we, poor sinful creatures, repine at a measure of suffering so far short of his, and also below our deserts; and so needful, perhaps, for maturing our Christian character, and preparing us for an admission into the kingdom of rest and peace. As my race is not yet completed, thou mayest be ready to wonder, all circumstances considered, at my boldness. But whatever may hereafter befall me, such is the present frame of my mind, that I am encouraged, with reverence and gratitude, I trust, thus to commune with thee, my endeared friend, for whom I desire all spiritual preservation and prosperity.

No. 207. To SARAH SQUIRE.

1833, 10 *mo.* 14.—From not hearing the contrary, I suppose thy dear T. may still be living, which is more than I once expected. I hope his protracted sufferings will have contributed to his more full preparation for an admission into the realms of eternal blessedness and peace, through the merits and mediation of his Redeemer. May the example also of his patience and resignation be such, as to diffuse instruction and encouragement through the little affectionate circle who surround him! proving to them, by a living illustration, the truth and beauty of the following lines, which I quote from memory :

“ From the flame’s refining power
 More pure the gold of Ophir flows ;
 From affliction’s trying hour
 More bright the Christian’s virtue glows.”

A petition that the Lord would undertake for thee, which, on our taking leave, thou saidst thou wast ready to utter, is one too familiar to my own experience to be soon forgotten. Ah, my dear friend, may we be strengthened in all our tribulations, thus to continue to pray ; and may, at least, a ray of hope never forsake us, that in the end we shall receive, if we faint not !

I find myself, at times, both pleased and edified by looking into some of the best of those publications, written professedly for children and young persons ;—the simplicity of the style and language suiting the present state of my understanding, whilst the conciseness of the sentences is equally convenient to my failing memory. On

taking one of these up very lately, I found the following passages so much to suit me, that I extracted them, and thinking they may suit thee also, I send thee a copy. The subject is, the miraculous draught of fishes:—"Though we have toiled unsuccessfully many a night and many a month, or even for years, we should never despair of God's goodness. Depending on his kindness, we should make new efforts, and expect and pray for his blessing on our honest industry. It is a very encouraging thought, that, even at the moment when his servants have been ready to give up all for lost, He has appeared for them in a wonderful manner, and sent deliverance and prosperity." And again, "Indeed, there is no case in which we have a right to say, The Saviour cannot help us."

How often, in the course of my chequered experience, I have been brought to the borders of despair, and ready to give up all for lost, I cannot tell thee; and how many times or in how many ways I have been mercifully helped in such seasons, I forbear to tell thee, lest it should savour of boasting. And as to what may be the extent or variety of my present trials, though they seem neither few nor light, yet, as my race is not fully completed, perhaps a further exposure of them may be the best confined to myself, and the great Searcher of hearts, our adorable and omnipotent God and Saviour.

208. TO JOSIAH FORSTER.

1834, 1 mo. 3.—It seems probable that my dear son John will leave Gedney, and that I must change my residence, neither of which is agreeable to me; but I hope I

am endeavouring to walk by that faith, and keep that patience, which I have been at times concerned to recommend to others ; yet fully sensible, as I believe it is generally allowed, that it is easier to preach than to practise. It is a great favour, however, not to find, on retrospect, a sting added to the trial. I will not now trouble thee more than to request a continuance of thy sympathetic remembrance, and best desires for mine and my family's preservation by that over-ruling Power, which only can conduct us with safety over the perilous ocean of time, and land us in security on the happy shores of eternity.

By how many dear friends, once well known and beloved by us, has this voyage been recently brought to its termination, and their immortal spirits, as we reverently trust, through the merits and mediation of Christ Jesus, their Redeemer, translated or introduced into that blessed inheritance to which I have alluded, where sorrow and sighing are unknown ; and instead of them, love, peace, and joy, are, perhaps, the only sensation experienced, forming the grateful theme of an everlasting hallelujah. How mingled, then, are our feelings on such occasions as that before us ! we mourn the loss which the church, the world, and their relatives sustain by their removal, whilst we can scarcely refrain from congratulating them on their escape from the cares and the conflicts of a mortal existence. This, I think, we may do without impatience, though not without desire, in the Lord's good time, to follow them to glory and happiness. Nor need such a desire at all interfere with our tenderest regards and obvious duties towards those beloved friends and connexions with whom we are yet associated in our earthly pilgrimage. Do not the bereavements which give rise to it rather strengthen

than relax, for every valuable purpose, the bond of our union?

How often, toiling many a day and many a night, are we brought to this point of silent trust, as our last resort and only refuge! May it be mercifully granted us in all our difficulties and dangers, until these calamities are overpast!

No. 209. To J. J. GURNEY.

1834, 1 mo. 7.—Thou inquirest of my health and spirits. The *first*, I am thankful to say, is good, and I am told I look well for my age: of the *last*, what shall I say? A monument of mercies innumerable! a brand plucked out of the fire! I ought to be ashamed to *complain*. If I know myself, I am ashamed to *murmur*; yet if, steering clear of both, I might simply *describe*—truth would certainly exclude all boasting. The scenes and changes, temporal and spiritual, of which, in the course of my chequered pilgrimage, I have been a witness and a partaker, with the reflections arising out of them, do at times press so heavily upon me, as, in opposition to all my striving and better feelings, to make me tremble.

Here I should say, that my friends are kind and my children affectionate; and that, therefore, mine is an insulated sorrow. Well, be it so! in the hour of my *conversion*, in that eventful hour I was commanded to be patient in adversity. Moreover, I know that I cannot have one pain more of body or mind than I have deserved. I am also very desirous that my sins may go beforehand to judgment, so that my sufferings may ter-

minate with the present life; and can I expect all this without enduring many tribulations? What, then, remains, but prayer for resignation and for ability to bear them?

Thou, my dear friend, wilt, I am sure thou dost, pray for me. The mercy of God in Christ Jesus is not only a darling theme with me, but I trust I may with reverence and humility add, here is my rock and my refuge in the day of affliction; when,—but I need not dilate, believing, as I do, that on this point we and thy dear companion have one common faith and hope.

In my morning meditation, the words, “Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me,” were brought to my mind; and on turning to the precious Psalm which contains them, my heart was somewhat tendered; and I believe my eyes would, if they could, have wept; but there is a state in which these fountains seem sealed up, and we are denied the consoling relief of tears. Now, in this description, I hope there is no murmuring; for I can most truly and sincerely say, at the end of it, “Good is the Lord in all and through all that has befallen or can befall us;” although, as his ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts higher than our thoughts, He may, and often does deal very inscrutably with us.

Although, during the first era of my life, up to about twenty, no human being could, I think, be more fond of society and its pleasures; yet the turnings and windings of my path since that day, have not only led me into a mental wilderness, but have very much reconciled me to all that I find there; so that being much alone is neither discouraging nor disagreeable to me. On the contrary, when I hear, and now and then get a view, as I did lately,

at a Lincoln electioneering, of the mighty stir in the great and busy world, I solace myself with such thoughts as these:

O! solitude, the man who thee foregoes,
When lucre hires him, or ambition stings,
Shall never know the source whence all true grandeur* springs.

Some, perhaps, would call me a fanciful misanthrope or recluse. I am persuaded thou wilt rather unite with me in the opinion, that, if a man have not thought of it before, it is time for him at nearly seventy-five, to familiarize the recollection that he must die *alone*, and before very long.

Thy last little book was a very acceptable present to me:† the subject was certainly the best that could be chosen, and I think it is well supported. Indeed, thou hadst this great advantage, that it is a much easier task to make such a theme appear lovely and excellent, than so to varnish a bad one as to render it even feasible. And how much talent and ingenuity have often been worse than thrown away in the latter cause! Happy, then, for thee, and for all those who have chosen that better part! which, as they cleave to it, shall never be taken from them; and which so clearly demonstrates, on a comparison, that the service of God and of Christ is indeed a light and easy yoke, when set against the oppression of the devil.

* I think *greatness* would do as well, and is not quite so proud a word.

† "On the habitual Exercise of Love to God."

No. 210. To J. AND H. C. BACKHOUSE, (when in America, travelling on religious service).

1834, 1 mo. 18.—Beware, my endeared friends, of giving too much place to the thought that it is absence from your friends and native land, or any combination of external causes, which occasions you pain or anxiety. These are to be found everywhere in our state of probation; and you may be surprised, when I say, that, even in the retirement of Gedney—which, except a few years at school, has always been my home—I, perhaps, have suffered both from bodily illness and mental necessitude equally with yourselves. I do not say that my sensibility, I mean a capacity for joy and sorrow, may be equal to yours; but according to this capacity, whatever it may be, I yield to no man the palm of tribulation. Yes; I have found, at different times in my life, and beginning at an early stage of it, affliction to press upon me in such an overwhelming manner, as to leave me but just in possession of life and intellect; and as these may, in a certain sense, be said to constitute the man; so, when reduced to the extremity alluded to, what advantage has the king on his throne over a beggar upon a dunghill? Here the weakest and the strongest mind, the brightest and the dullest genius are brought to a level; and should either of them be inclined to boast, if they are honest, I believe it must be with Paul and with me, (for once I place myself by his side,) in our infirmities.

When I look back over a life, which has not been a very short one, I am ready to think that, prior to experi-

ence, I should have doubted the possibility of so much or such a variety of suffering or trouble, arising in a seclusion bordering on solitude; and I have no less cause to be astonished at the merciful preservation and deliverances hitherto vouchsafed to me; which I find I have as much need, and therefore as much reason, devoutly to pray for as ever, seeing that bonds and afflictions still abide me. But should it from hence appear, as has been asserted by others, that the Christian's life is a continual warfare, and should watchfulness be required to the last hour, yet, in remembrance of the past, under support of the present, and in hope of the future, I can, I trust, with reverence and humility say, thanks be to God, I am not in despair.

Love and esteem for your excellent father's memory is still cherished by me, and sometimes tender emotion, not unmixed with desire, in the Lord's good time, through the merits and mediation of an adorable Redeemer, to follow my friend to those happy abodes, of which, as we have cause humbly to believe, he is now a blissful inhabitant. How precious, when we can ever so faintly, if livingly, hope, that such will be our final destination!

It has indeed been the case, that I have been ready to conclude the storm beats from every quarter; but amidst it all, I take courage in the belief that the fabric of our valuable religious Society, small and unpopular as it may appear, is nevertheless founded upon a rock; and I do most assuredly believe with you, that its principles, however analyzed and proved, will stand the test, and be found to contain the finest of the wheat. If we venture, however, to speak of the practical operation of these prin-

ciples, as exemplified in the conduct and conversation, or lives of their professors, I fear we must lower our tone; and by one comprehensive word, *alas!* include the expression of our surprise, our fears, and our lamentation. For my own part, I am but just able to cling to the hope, that, raised as it was, at the expense of all that is dear to man in this life, and by such a display of Omnipotence, it will not be suffered by its almighty Founder to become extinct, and again to immerge into that chaos of opinion and practice, which, both before and since its rise, has so remarkably characterized and divided what is sometimes called the religious world—more sanguine and less timid than I am, and disposed to make the best of everything, takes a brighter view of our situation; but as an object takes the hue of the medium through which it is seen, perhaps he looks through a burnished glass, and I through a smoked one, neither of them affording a correct vision.

I cannot but think the present is an extraordinary time, both in our Society and out of it, as it regards a great part of what passes under the name of civilized and religious communities. And whilst we cannot but rejoice at the much good that is doing and contemplated, we are grieved by the number and enormity of the evils that positively exist. And when I have heard of the differences and disputes that have arisen in Bible Societies, and Anti-slavery Societies, and the spirit in which these controversies were conducted; moreover, when I am told of vain speculation and useless discussion obtruding themselves into scenes and circumstances where we have been accustomed to look for nothing but harmony and peace, I have,

perhaps too hastily, been ready to say in my heart,—Surely the spirit of discord must be let loose, not upon a section of the earth only, but upon all the inhabitants of it, to prove and to try them in the sieve of vanity, emptiness, and confusion, perhaps preparatory to something better. Well, in this hope let us endeavour to rest, planting our feet as firmly as we can amidst these shifting sands ; and as we may be enabled, looking up to that omniscient and over-ruling Providence, whose tender mercies are over all his works ; blessing Him for his grace, and giving Him thanks for the outward revelation of his will as contained in the Holy Scriptures ; which all seem to me to tend to the same point—the calming and settling our poor minds upon Himself, as the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, which is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty.

My health is just now, and upon the whole, pretty good, having so far the use of my limbs and faculties, as to do common things for myself ; and for the rest, I am much indebted under a gracious Providence to my dear children and friends. The last twelve months have considerably lessened the number of my cotemporaries, both amongst friends and neighbours, so that my own sometimes feels rather like a protracted life, and reminds me of Doctor Johnson's line,

“ The Christian lags superfluous on the stage.”

May I wait with resigned and patient hope until my change come, and above all, may I be prepared for it ! a desire in which I believe you will unite ; and I can believe also, that, if consistent with the will of our heavenly Father, it would be pleasant to us all to meet again

in mutability;* though to depart and be with Christ would be still better, because then all would be safe.

No 211. To J. J. GURNEY.

1834, 3 *mo.* 1.—Thou hast expressed a desire for my sympathetic remembrances in the prosecution of thy arduous engagements in London and its vicinity. These thou hast I believe daily, how much oftener I cannot say. One thing I know, that, if ever my heart be enabled to ascend by living aspirations to the throne of grace, I desire to bear thee upon it, and that thy true interests of every kind, may be inseparably connected with every breathing and every cry for myself and others, who are the most near and dear to me. So that were I indeed a father, as thou art willing to suppose, perhaps I could do no more.

On the very important subject of prayer, I sometimes think, that, were the Holy Scriptures, which I increasingly value, sufficiently read and contemplated, without superseding or disparaging either secret or public supplication, by such a practice, we should have no need of other Liturgies; as in those invaluable records may be found, not only descriptions of almost every possible case and circumstance into which the mind of man can be brought; but confessions, praises, and petitions suited to all the varieties of these innumerable changes, which are often supplied to us in the needful time, and with wonderful adaptation, by that principle, or gift of grace, so appropriately denominated, the good remembrancer.

* This did not take place.

Accordingly, may I presume to say, my own mind seems just now to dwell with some degree of rest and hope on two separate portions of sacred writ, the universal prayer of the poor publican, and the more particular and private one of David, where he thus implores, "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth." I have called the first of these ejaculations universal, because when some knowledge of God and of ourselves is attained, I suppose there is scarcely another form of words so congenial to the contrited heart, or that when thus humbled so unconsciously and spontaneously escapes from the trembling lips. The last, I call private or particular, as more especially belonging to that advanced stage of human life at which I am now arrived.

As I often find it easier to copy than to compose, I sometimes supply my own deficiency of stock from other quarters; and in this way I propose occupying a part of the present sheet by the following extract from Henry Martyn, who says:

"It has been well observed by one,* who took a profound view of human nature, that there are three very different orbits in which great men move and shine, and that each share of greatness has its respective admirers. There are those who as heroes fill the world with their exploits; they are greeted with the acclamations of the multitude; they are ennobled whilst living, and their names descend with lustre to posterity. Others there are who, by the brilliancy of their imagination or the vigour of their intellect, attain to honour of a purer and higher kind: the fame of these is confined to a more select number, all

* Pascal.

have not a discriminating sense of their merit. A third description there is, distinct from both the former, and far more exalted than either, whose excellence consists in a renunciation of themselves, and a compassionate love for mankind. In this order the Saviour of the world was pleased to appear; and those persons obtain the highest rank in it, who by his grace are enabled most closely to follow his example."

I very much admire the correctness of these views, particularly as regards the last, which, speaking religiously, I think is quite the climax of human excellence. In the class thus defined, I therefore, not only desire that thou, my dear friend, mayst ever be found; but that all thy labours by word or writing, may have a uniform tendency to produce and to cherish such true disciples of Christ—of which, whatever she may think, the world has much need. And whilst it is admitted that such characters must not seek great things for themselves, and that they need not expect the distinctions of earthly grandeur or fame, either on a throne, in the academy, or in the senate; but on the contrary, in following their despised and dishonoured Master, may occasionally have to appear as spectacles to the world, and to angels, and to men; still I must maintain the sublime and superior nature, both of their present reward, and of their future prospects, which are no less than a foretaste of heavenly peace, even in this world, and in that which is to come, life everlasting. In endeavouring to secure these, is it not worth while to make some sacrifices, and even if it must be so, to suffer persecution, by being accounted as the filth of the earth, and the offscouring of all things?

I think thou wilt now perceive, that I have no objection

to thy preaching "Christ crucified," even should it be attended at times with fear and trembling:—exercises which the apostle Paul not only recognises, but has in one instance placed in a very high connexion, no less than the important business of the soul's salvation. We need not then be either afraid or ashamed of this honourable distinction, which perhaps often cometh from God only.

No. 212. To J. J. GURNEY.

1834, 7 mo. 23.—Thou hast not been mistaken in supposing that, even in the retirement of "green Gedney," though now like Earlham in its beauty, I may possibly have known something of exercise, or even of conflict since we parted. This has indeed been the case, which might probably be not only a preparative, but tend considerably to increase the consolation I received from thy last affectionate letter, though I am afraid of accepting in full the hope thou hast expressed of my state. This to myself seems truly described in the twelfth verse of the fortieth Psalm: "For innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of mine head, therefore my heart faileth me." I hope also there are seasons in which I can adopt and appropriate the pathetic supplications contained in the preceding and following verses. "Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me." "Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make haste to help me." Even with the

desired haven in sight, I sometimes am afraid I shall never reach it ; and yet the alternative is so awful that I still buffet the waves, and, with hope on one hand and fear on the other, struggle on. Should these trials ultimately prove to have made a part of the good fight of faith, over the difficulties of which an adorable Redeemer will in his own time and way give me the victory, what a theme for everlasting gratitude, thanksgiving, and praise ! But whilst they are passing, am I not a poor creature, and is it any wonder that thou shouldst be introduced into sympathy with such an one ?

In meditating on the many trials, some of them perhaps comparable to baptism, “into the cloud and into the sea,” that sometimes separately, and at others conjointly attend the spiritual traveller, more especially the Gospel minister, in the progress of his journey, I have been a little encouraged by the remembrance, that even on the father of the faithful, a horror of great darkness is said to have fallen : that Jonah the prophet was literally plunged into the billows of the great deep and preserved unharmed, whilst they passed over him ; and that to a state tossed with tempest, and not comforted, those precious promises were made, which doubtless down to the present day, have been, and still are, fulfilling. So that in our darkest moments,—and do they not at times appear very dark ?—we have ground to hope, that if we do not cast away our confidence, our reward will be sure. May it then be the predominant desire of our hearts, that help equal to every exigency may be granted, enabling us either to preach the Gospel of our Redeemer, or, if more consistent with his blessed will respecting us, silently to suffer. The latter, if I mistake

not my vocation, seems more peculiarly the lot appointed for me.

The Sacred Writings bear abundant testimony to the character and offices of Christ, the living ineffable essential *Word*. They negatively disclaim all assumption or infringement upon either this character or these offices; and according to my apprehension, for this very obvious reason, that as they are not such in reality, so they should not be confounded with *Him*, or his attributes, who made and upholds the world by the word of his power, and is the life of all that lives, both in nature and in grace. There also appears the less reason for this confusion, as we know there are such a number and variety of suitable appellations, by which the Sacred Writings may be designated. I think there is also a danger, and in this perhaps lies the principal weight of the objection, lest, by resting in the Scriptures as the only word, we should neglect or avoid coming to Christ himself, to have those operations performed in and upon our hearts, by which the pride of man is humbled, and his loftiness laid in the dust. For what can be more abasing, than to come to that stone by which we shall be broken? Yet this is easier, than for it to fall upon us and grind us to powder; and whatever may be our reluctance or unbelief, submit we must. To the name of Jesus every knee must bow, either in mercy or in judgment.

Please to present my dear love to thy aunt; how deeply interesting to me was the transient interview with her! the first, since the decease of her husband; what a crowd of mingled sensations, impossible to describe, rushed with almost the rapidity of lightning across my mind! sorrow for the loss of a dear, perhaps taken for all in all,

my dearest friend—joy in his emancipation—sympathy with his valuable relict, and with all those who, like her, so loved him, as never to expect on earth, to look upon his like again. Was not this much to be compressed in a space of time comparable to the twinkling of an eye; and yet if my heart does not greatly deceive me, I felt it all, and am thankful that I could feel it; as I desire never to outlive a capacity for such emotions on suitable occasions, and in their due degree: for notwithstanding modern speculations, they are neither barren nor morbid sensibilities; on the contrary, though unseen of men, I believe they are productive of glory, honour, and praise, to their Holy Author.

No. 213. To PETER BEDFORD.

1834, 8 *mo.* 15.—I still decidedly think there is a plain difference between the Sacred Writings, highly as I value them, and the Spirit that gave them forth, and but for which they would never have been; I am therefore solicitous, perhaps almost to tenacity, that what appears to me to be an important and proper distinction should be preserved. And further as there are so many appropriate appellations, by which the Holy Scriptures may be designated without the least disparagement of their excellence and superiority to all other writings, it would be a matter of deep regret, if, by assuming a title which they nowhere claim for themselves, a single mind should be diverted from a due seeking after and attention unto that inspeaking Word nigh in the heart, which is able to save the soul.

At our last parting, thou thought I looked rather

anxious and depressed ; I am not aware that this was more the case then, than I expect may pretty often happen. I should regret giving an appearance of gloom to religion, for none belongs to it ; and still more to make the heart of the righteous sad, by bearing about with me a visible expression of my own cares. Perhaps it might not be too much for me to say, that, as sackcloth has on various accounts long been the covering of my spirit, this homely garment, though meant to be secret, may sometimes unintentionally and unknown to myself, be seen through the veil of flesh, that transparent veil, of which, in allusion to fine threads of mortality at last giving way, it has been beautifully observed, one gentle sigh may rend, and introduce us into an entirely new state of things, a purely spiritual world.

No. 214. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

1834, 9 *mo.* 13.—How necessary it appears for those whose standing in society scarcely admits of their being indifferent, or even inactive spectators, to be watchful and careful of every step they take, not only for the sake of others, but for their own sakes, that so none of these shakings may move them from that sure foundation, on which the feet of their minds may have once been mercifully placed !

And as I believe the false notion of “once in grace, ever in grace,” makes no part either of thy creed or mine, I cannot doubt but that we both feel the necessity for continual watchfulness unto prayer, that we may be favoured with wisdom and strength to stand in every time

of need and of trial, whatever be its nature. For the longer we live, the more sensible we probably each of us are, that it is not by past experience, or even by those works of righteousness, (and such I think they may be called,) which through divine assistance we may in days past have obediently performed; that the work of the soul's salvation is wrought out, and completed: but that the repeated washing of regeneration, and the fresh renewings of the Holy Ghost are absolutely necessary to the carrying on and perfecting of this all important concern.

It may be worthy of observation that the houses described in the parable, as those of wise and foolish builders were equally exposed to the storm, though their end was so different. But in the full consideration of this important passage of Scripture, we must, I apprehend, have regard both to the free agency and fallibility of man, by supposing that, although his feet may have been set even upon a rock that was higher than himself, and his goings established so long as he continued thereupon; by admitting also that whilst in a state of probation, he has the power of changing his position;—and from his natural weakness and corruption, acted upon as they are, he is under a continual liability of being either drawn or seduced from it; so that it is only as divine ability is sought and obtained to endure and not yield to the tempest, that his building, however fair and specious, can possibly stand through all the vicissitudes of time, especially as danger is sometimes found to lurk, unperceived by merely human vision, in the very calm and sunshine of life.

There are two objects, which though outwardly very dissimilar, yet taken figuratively, seem to have considerable bearing upon Christian experience. A vessel that with

broken mast and torn sails, is still kept steady by ballast ; and the eagle, which, after having had its plumage sorely ruffled by weather, gains the top of a promontory, from whence, relying upon her stability, she views and braves the storm, waiting in pensive yet majestic solitude the return of a serener sky. I sometimes have thought as applied to an aged pilgrim (say any one but myself,) these lines are very beautiful and appropriate :—

“ As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
 Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm ;
 Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread
 Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

Attended however as I am by fears and failings, I must not soar either with the eagle, or with the saint ; and I am therefore now and then not a little encouraged, when dear friends can hope for me, that which I scarcely dare hope for myself. At the same time it would be ungrateful to the Lord, and might seem discouraging to his people, were I to withhold the reverent acknowledgment, that there are seasons in which I am enabled to adopt this language of the Psalmist, “Blessed be God who has not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.”

No. 215. TO SARAH SQUIRE.

1834, 9 mo. 20.—I have been familiar with both bodily and mental sufferings, especially the latter, from my very childhood. I have been lifted up and cast down, emptied from vessel to vessel ; my plans and my prospects, even the brightest and best of them, so turned and overturned, that, were any one to ask for my history, I perhaps might

send them to that remarkable hymn, entitled "Prayers answered by Crosses," in which I seem to behold my own face as in a glass; and yet in all, and through all this, I can reverently acknowledge that the Lord has preserved and at times signally helped me. Blessed be his holy and adorable Name!

Ought I not then, and ought not any one who has passed through such a course—a course of which we may the more freely speak, as it is one not very likely to excite self-complacency; ought we not, after experiencing such awful vicissitudes, to be willing, according to the ability afforded, to enter into exercise with one another as companions in tribulation; and when it is given us, to drop a word, if it be only *a* word, of encouragement or consolation to a brother or a sister who is weary. Thus happy, as instruments in the Divine hand, however weak and unworthy of ourselves, we may at seasons contribute to hold up the hands that hang down, and confirm the feeble knees.

I may perhaps have been partly led into the indulgence of these reflections, by a reference in thy letter to the short portion of Scripture, which I thought it best for me to revive at Spalding; and in yielding to the impression, from the manner in which thou sayest it has recurred and dwelt with thee, I hope I was not wrong. May we not both with humble gratitude believe that the application of it to thy benefit was indeed the Lord's doing, and even marvellous in our eyes that so small a matter in itself should have been made a comfort to thee in perhaps a needful time? This may teach us that it is the blessing of the Most High, either upon much or little, that can only make our labours prosperous according to Scripture

“Paul may plant, Apollos water, but” &c. I think the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, from which my very brief quotation was taken, favours these views, and is, at least in several parts of it, deeply interesting to a gospel minister. Often, when perplexed by considering how limited our knowledge, and how incomprehensible are the dealings of Providence with us, in our present state of probation, has my mind been driven as it were for refuge to this important verse, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord.” Here I have generally found rest in the renewed conviction that I must trust in something better than my own understanding. Should we be favoured at last to reach the haven of peace, many things which are now difficult and incomprehensible to us, will receive a solution. “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter,” said the blessed Jesus to his warm-hearted, but somewhat prompt and inquisitive disciple.

The pathetic supplication which thou hast cited,—“Spare thy people, O Lord,” &c. as the often-adopted language of thy heart, is a passage to which mine also frequently responds, as from the depths of silence and solitude: in my case therefore it may much oftener aspire in a groan unutterable, than by other expressions. But it may be worthy of observation, that a fast, and solemn assembly was first convened, as a preparation or prelude to the vocal and more public utterance of this mournful and piercing cry; yet after being thus reduced as into the valley of humiliation, what most precious promises and assurances were given to the people. And were the members of our religious Society more generally willing to be in like manner humbled and broken, who can tell but the

Lord might graciously condescend to look down upon us, and give us to experience brighter days and better things?

No. 216. To J. J. GURNEY.

1834, 10 *mo.* 25.—Being rather tottering, I do not see what I can do better, than place myself between thee and thy dear Mary, as those who I believe will be both able and willing to lend support to an old friend, until he recover breath to pursue, or strength to finish his course, whichever may in wisdom or in mercy be appointed him.

The plain truth is, that, owing partly perhaps to the autumnal weather, I have been rather unwell for the last week or ten days, which has kept me mostly within doors, and twice from meeting, so that from the manner in which the cold and damp air affects my chest, I am apprehensive of being obliged to take up my winter quarters earlier than usual.

I have also—without any additionally obvious reason, and amidst all, with very much to be thankful for, both to Providence and my friends—been a good deal tried with mental suffering, so that sometimes I have thought I could comprehend, if I did not experience, the import of these significant lines:

“Can the poor heart always ache?

No:—the tortured nerve will languish

Or the strings of life must break.”

What a favour it is, as we probably each of us know, when the strained nerve of sensibility relaxes into tenderness, or, in language more familiar with our profession and character, when exercises difficult to bear, and beyond our

own power to remove, are lightened by the hand of that Saviour, who promised rest to the weary and heavy-laden soul, or when perhaps for a season they may be entirely taken away by a gracious God, who, saith the apostle, is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear.

In seeking for the cause of these baptisms—and this, however vain it may appear, is a thing we can scarcely avoid—a dim light seems to arise from the consideration that, as I certainly “have not attained, neither am already perfect,” it consequently follows that the important work of regeneration may be, must be, incomplete, and that perhaps the almost nameless feelings alluded to, are a part of the sufferings attendant on this progressive and necessary work of forming that entirely new creature, or spiritual character, of which it is said, “Old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new ; and all things are of God.”

From the first surrender of the human will to the guidance and government of the Holy Spirit, I apprehend the birth immortal takes its date ; and so long as our will continues to be resigned and subject to the Divine will, though it may be attended with many interruptions, and by no means exempt from probation, yet the new creature gradually goes forward, through every change, in summer and winter, by night and by day ; so that first the little child, next the young man, then the strong man, are successively produced ; until finally, should natural life be continued, and obedience keep pace with knowledge, the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ is attained.

It is however a cheering and encouraging thought, which I sometimes indulge, at least on behalf of others, es-

pecially for pious young people, or newly converted persons, that, at whatever stage of his character or growth, the real Christian may be summoned from this world, he is safe and in a state of acceptance. In that sense I understand the passage, "The child shall die an hundred years old," &c. But let not this view, for I think it need not, cause any to neglect their daily business of watching unto prayer, or induce them to slacken in their spiritual journey ; rather let it stimulate them to go on from grace to grace, that so their day's work having kept pace with the day, whenever called, they may be prepared.

I have been pleased to hear that dear Mary has received the acknowledgment of Friends as a minister ; and were I to add a word of fatherly advice, it might be this : that, as a servant of Christ, she endeavour to show all good fidelity, adorning the doctrine of God her Saviour in all things : and on the other hand, that she never, as I fear is sometimes attempted, decorate self with *his* inestimable jewels, which are committed to us in trust, for use, not for ornament ; this practice I believe seldom answers. We had much better in simplicity and sincerity, seek only to serve and honour the Lord, leaving it to Him to honour us in the way He sees best ; and should we not receive it from our fellow mortals, if we are faithful, He will bestow upon us that which is far better, even the honour that cometh from Himself only. Let her diligently and carefully attend to her own precious gift. "Mind your calling, brethren," is an excellent motto.

On my way homeward from our late Quarterly Meeting, while stopping to bait at Swineshead, I walked into the burial-ground, called the church-yard, where amongst names and other inscriptions, "spelt by the unlettered

“muse,” I at length discovered, something like a diamond, which pleased me so much, that, borrowing a pencil, and resting on a neighbouring tombstone, I copied it, and intend herewith to send it to thee. Independently of its composition, which perhaps thou mayest think with me is of no very common order, it possesses an intrinsic advantage, from being, as I am well assured, historically true, which cannot always be said of epitaphs and eulogies. Possibly Mary may find in plain prose the short and simple annals of this pious poor woman amongst her tracts, headed “Amelia Gale, Swineshead, Lincolnshire.”

Inscription over the grave of Amelia Gale, late of Swineshead; copied from the stone, the 11th of 10th mo. 1834.

“Alive, when all her kin were dead

Alone in this dark world she stood,
Like the scathed oak that lifts its head,
Where flourished once a mighty wood.

Yet ere the sinner passed from earth,
Who long had drawn unhallowed breath,
The Gospel gave her second birth,
To save her from the second death.

Then lived she to herself no more
But loving much, since much forgiven,
Her Saviour’s cross she meekly bore,
And took the Calvary road to heaven.

And still she lives to Him, though dead,
For while her memory survives,
Others, by her example led,
May show her living in their lives.”

Grave as the subject of these lines is, they may possibly brighten some that preceded them; but however this may be, I hope you (for I have had both in view

from beginning to end) will accept the whole as a token of my affectionate remembrance, and unchanging love.

P. S. I have been informed that you are likely soon to resume your weighty religious engagement in and about London, in which it is my sincere desire, that the Lord may be your ever-present helper, and his beloved Son, Christ Jesus, your *All in all*. How comprehensive is this idea!

No. 217. To JOSIAH FORSTER.

1834, 12 mo. 8.—I think it no small privilege that I am yet able to appreciate the friendship of many loved and valued Friends, which, if accompanied by the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, I consider the sweetest enjoyment on this side the grave. And if thou canst admit of my definition of unity, as consisting of love, concord, and harmony with each other, and peace as the kindness of our heavenly Father to us all, perhaps we shall be agreed; for what can we expect in a state of probation, as this life certainly is, beyond these holy and precious feelings. And yet perhaps some of us old folks, with infirmities increasing, and dangers attending, may be allowed at times to sigh for that further happiness, which an apostle has told us, is far better than a continuance here. May we be enabled to wait with patience for this blessed consummation of our faith and hope!

I was more concerned than surprised, to find by thy letter, that several of my beloved friends in thy neighbourhood, some of them like myself, of a generation fast passing away, have been unwell, and that one of thy aged aunts is deceased.

I have thought it not improbable that elderly persons may feel somewhat different to younger ones, on the death of their cotemporaries ; less acutely on their own account, and more of a quiet hope, sometimes almost amounting to congratulation of the emancipated spirit of their departed friend, whom, in the Lord's good time, they would gladly follow.

There are two words, *love* and *truth*, which taken singly, seem so to fill the mind with their important signification, that one is ready to think, they almost comprehend all that can be said on the subjects to which they respectively relate ; and yet we find, that, in able hands and under right influence, each of them admits of an amplification, to which it is not easy, if possible, to set any limits. Perhaps the little volume of our dear J. J. Gurney's, the perusal of which thou sayest afforded thee satisfaction, may be some illustration of the last remark. I, too, though as thou knowest, no amplifier myself, have just been reading it, and I trust with feelings somewhat similar to thine, as to the exceeding greatness of "the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord;" respecting which, whilst on one hand we find that the contemplation of it strikes us with reverential silence ; on the other it appears, that, under a well directed sense of duty, too much scope can scarcely be given to utterance ; and that the theme, when due allowance is made for its earthen vehicle, whether tongue or pen, is, like its source, inexhaustible. In heaven, this rapturous hosannah, free from human imperfections, doubtless resounds continually, with every advantage and charm that purified and glorified spirits only can bestow. See Rev. v. and vii. 9, to the end of each chapter.

No. 218. To J. AND H. C. BACKHOUSE.

1834, 12 *mo.* 15.—The Lord's servants in different ages have been led about and instructed in a way marvellous to themselves and others, not unfrequently in direct opposition to their own desires and conclusions ; and yet they have not been able to find any other way to true peace, than by yielding obedience to the pointings of apprehended duty. Amidst a cloud of witnesses we may instance the apostle Paul, who was much exercised after this manner, by being commanded to go here, and forbidden to go there, without regard to his previous thoughts or the appearance of things, and sometimes against both one and the other. He assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered him not ; and when on another occasion, he was assured even by a prophet, that if he persisted in his design of going up to Jerusalem, bonds and afflictions awaited him, he nevertheless went ; and as to his general commission to preach the Gospel, he seems to have considered the performance of it against his will, as a seal and confirmation of his appointment.

It may indeed truly be said, as in ancient times, of the Creator and Preserver of men, "How great is his goodness, and how wonderful are his works towards the children of men ! His judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out ; for after a manner incomprehensible by mere human intellect He deals with us, both in temporal and spiritual things." I think this is not too much to affirm ; nor need it surprise or alarm us when we consider the scriptural declaration, that the ways of the Lord are higher than our ways ; and his thoughts than our thoughts. May He be graciously pleased, through the mediation of his beloved Son, a High Priest touched with a feeling of human infir-

mities, to grant us faith and patience equal to our exigencies in all the turnings of his holy hand within and without us ; and this, if we ask according to his will we are encouraged to expect that He will do ; and in endeavouring to petition for it, let us also believe that the Spirit will help us sometimes in an unutterable manner. Whatever else you may think of these sentiments, you will not, I am persuaded, consider them as mere words of course, or technicalities of my religious education. No : if I did not know what it was to suffer, if I had not experienced the necessity of resignation, and the impossibility without divine aid of living under its constant exercise, I think I dare not express myself as I have done ; but however different our localities may be, I feel convinced, that, as respects the common salvation, there is equal need of being fed with the same spiritual food from the same spiritual source in every part of the world.

No. 219. To J. J. GURNEY.

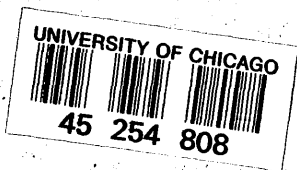
1835, 1 *mo.* 29.—Knowing the aboundings of thy sympathetic mind towards me, I am ready to fear that I must have made thee “sorry” by more than one letter, particularly by the last. It seems due to our friendship, that, whenever circumstances will warrant, you both should be made “partakers of my joy,” especially if, as I trust at the present time, this joy is in the Lord, towards whose holy habitation, having endeavoured to look up out of inexpressible depths, He has, as I reverently believe, condescended once more to listen to my cry, and place my feet again on dry ground, where, as on the banks of deliverance, I am enabled to lift up my hands in his name, and return Him grateful thanks.

It being however the safest to say little of ourselves, further than may appear likely in some way to promote the glory of God, or the benefit one of another, and moreover as it requires care that we be not too lavish of bread given us for our own support, I shall not enlarge much more on this subject than to give you the invitation of David, at Psalm xc. verse 6. "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;" unless it be just to add, that, although I am at present thus favoured with a considerable degree of relief from mental suffering, yet former experience convinces me that I ought to "rejoice with trembling," and if I express my feelings at all, that it should be in the subdued and chastened voice of deep humiliation:—seeing that I am still in the body, attended by wants and infirmities, and surrounded by the combined operation of causes, both physical and mental, which, but for the exercise of unmerited mercy and almighty power, must long since have sunk me to rise no more; and which but for a continuance of the same power and mercy, may yet conduct my gray head by the path of sorrow to the grave. Well—here I stand, and the above I think is a sober, and not an exaggerated *exposé* of my present condition, at least of my thoughts.

On a comparison of intellectual, perhaps it might even be said, of religious characters, we perceive a surprising variety. Thus, if thou were to place those of thy two aged friends, the late Wm. Wilberforce, and him who is now addressing thee, side by side, I suppose the contrast would appear striking; but need this offend or alarm us? Is not harmony itself composed of different parts, appropriately sustained? so that if every bird is but true and faithful to its own note, perhaps it shall not matter much whether it

be that of the plaintive dove, or the more melodious nightingale.

I must now tell thee how much I have been comforted and almost delighted by the second section of thy little volume on "Love to God;" and having a few friends with me last evening, I had it read for our mutual benefit and enjoyment, and had the satisfaction of believing that these effects were produced: may the impression be permanent. Of the few first pages of this acceptable book, I have been a little doubtful, as to how far a meetness or preparation for the enjoyment of heaven may not be insisted on in a way, and to an extent, rather discouraging to the *eleventh-hour* sinner, or the death-bed penitent: two descriptions of persons, who I am persuaded are so interesting to each of us, that we should be sorry to put them in too much fear of the blessed and high privilege promised even to a *late* repentance, by the forgiveness of sins; I need not say through *whose* merits, mediation, and advocacy. But the poor prodigal, Mary Magdalene, the thief on the cross, Rochester, Buckingham, and similar instances of scriptural and biographical notoriety, suit my own case so well, and have been so much and so long the subjects of my meditation, that I may possibly have acquired too strong a bias in favour of gratuitous mercy, as containing in itself a grand preparative, by inspiring sometimes very late and very suddenly the important sentiments and feelings of deep self-abasement on one hand; and on the other, the most exalted love and gratitude to God—dispositions, in which whatever else may be granted, I desire more than I can express, that *we*, my beloved friends, may, with the innumerable company of redeemed souls, who reach that haven of rest and peace, spend a joyful eternity in thanksgiving and praise!



No. 220. To J. J. AND M. GURNEY.

Chatteris, 1835, 2 mo. 26.—Being favoured with the ability, I am inclined to tell you that I yet live and love you ; considering you, as I do, one in the Lord ; and in your kindness to me, of course, this my love towards you, is one and undivided. Still I should be sorry to request the fatigue of a visit from you both ; yet if his engagements will allow it, and his dear Master permit it, a visit from Joseph would be so much more than a mere satisfaction, that, subject as above stated, I think he will not refuse me ; for though I believe myself convalescent, it would be presumptuous to be sanguine. I shall at present only add, that goodness and mercy attend me. Praised be the Lord !

This last extract, written only a few weeks before his final close, was dictated by our aged and beloved friend, (he had begun the letter, but was too feeble to proceed,) when recovering from the serious illness which he met with at his son's residence. It is truly animating to observe, as the end of life drew near, after all the mental conflicts of this christian pilgrim, which however had not been unmingled with spiritual joys, how he was enabled to lay hold of the hope set before him in the Gospel, and to look forward to that happy period, when he should be for ever united with his Lord and Redeemer. His purified spirit is now, we reverently trust, added to the ransomed of the Lord, who come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads ; who obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing flee away. " Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord ! "

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Dr. J. J. J. J. J.

No. 220. To J. J. AND M. GURNEY.

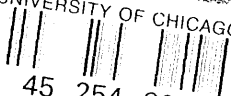
Chatteris, 1835, 2 mo. 26.—Being favoured with the ability, I am inclined to tell you that I yet live and love you ; considering you, as I do, one in the Lord ; and in your kindness to me, of course, this my love towards you, is one and undivided. Still I should be sorry to request the fatigue of a visit from you both ; yet if his engagements will allow it, and his dear Master permit it, a visit from Joseph would be so much more than a mere satisfaction, that, subject as above stated, I think he will not refuse me ; for though I believe myself convalescent, it would be presumptuous to be sanguine. I shall at present only add, that goodness and mercy attend me. Praised be the Lord !

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